On Mass Media, State Capacity, And Civil Conflict

Jacob Walter Dryden

University of Mississippi

Follow this and additional works at: https://egrove.olemiss.edu/etd

Part of the International Relations Commons

Recommended Citation
https://egrove.olemiss.edu/etd/783

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at eGrove. It has been accepted for inclusion in Electronic Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of eGrove. For more information, please contact egrove@olemiss.edu.
ON MASS MEDIA, STATE CAPACITY, AND CIVIL CONFLICT

A Dissertation Presented

for the Partial Fulfillment of the

Doctor of Philosophy Degree in

Political Science The University of Mississippi

Jacob Walter Dryden

August 2014
ABSTRACT

State capacity scholars contend that a state’s capabilities objectively predict its likelihood of civil conflict onset. The state capacity literature argues that the likelihood of civil conflict increases when military strength, regime revenue, and/or political institution coherence decrease. However, for this theoretical causal linkage to hold, the state capacity literature must assume that prospective rebels possess complete regime capabilities information; whereas, prospective rebels will know to rebel when the regime has a sufficiently weak, low revenue, and/or an incoherent political institution.

I begin my dissertation by contending that incomplete information is more indicative of prospective rebels’ informational abilities. Next, I consider how incomplete information changes the rebellion decision calculation for prospective rebels; prospective rebels use perception of the regime’s capabilities, not actual capabilities, to determine whether or not to rebel. Incorporating aspects from literatures and fields not typically associated with civil conflict, I hypothesize that two mass media dimensions, media freedom and media access, have a significant interactive effect on how prospective rebels perceive the regime’s capabilities which influences a state’s probability of civil conflict. Using a logistic regression, I empirically examine Media Interaction with established civil conflict literature variables on all states from 1993 to 2004. Over a series of models, predicted probabilities estimations, and a controlled experiment, I determine two novel findings: 1) mass media significantly impacts the likelihood of civil conflict under certain conditions and 2) the state capacity literature’s objective assumption misses important civil conflict onset variance.
DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to Kayla Marie Doerr. Without your encouragement and support, this dissertation would never have been possible.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank my parents, Richard and Susan Dryden Jr., for your support. I am fairly sure my Scottish-American stubbornness is what got me through the dissertation. To my friends Samuel Gedman, Dr. Salvatore “Sam” Russo, Dr. Matthew Placek, and Serhan Yalciner, your willingness to spitball about the dissertation was crucial. Old South! To Dr. Paul Matthew Loveless, without your Political Communication course in Fall 2010 at Ole Miss, I never would have written about mass media effect. Xanadu! To my dissertation committee and particularly my dissertation committee chair Dr. Timothy Nordstrom, I appreciate all your advice, patience, and providing needed “motivation” at crucial points during the dissertation process. Finally, to the fine staff of the Poplar-Ridgeway Starbucks, thank you for providing the coffee that fueled the lion’s share of this project and asking almost every day, “So, when will you be done, again?”

Now.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEDICATION</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF FIGURES</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. LITERATURE REVIEW</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. THEORY</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. ANALYSIS</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. CONCLUSION</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>142</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VITA</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE/TABLE                          PAGE

2.1 Norris’s Media System 2 x 2 Matrix .......................................................................................... 28
3.1 The Implications for Media Environment Message Mix by the Level of Media Freedom ....44
3.2 The Likely Level of Regime Capabilities Information by the Level of Media Access by Domestic Class .................................................................................................................. 59
3.3 Norris’s Media System Model with Media Effect Variance by Domestic Group .................. 68
3.4 Likely Rebellion Decisions in a “High” Media Freedom and “Widespread” Media Access Media System Type by Class .................................................................................................................. 74
3.5 Likely Rebellion Decisions in a “High” Media Freedom and “Limited” Media Access Media System Type by Class .................................................................................................................. 77
3.6 Likely Rebellion Decisions in a “Low” Media Freedom and “Widespread” Media Access Media System Type by Class .................................................................................................................. 84
3.7 Likely Rebellion Decisions in a “Low” Media Freedom and “Limited” Media Access Media System Type by Class .................................................................................................................. 87
3.8 The Anticipated Probability of Civil Conflict by Media Freedom Type as Media Access Level Varies ...................................................................................................................................... 93
4.1 Logistic Regression of Media Variables with Multiple Imputation on the Determinants of Civil Conflict Onset .................................................................................................................. 116
4.2 Logistic Regression Models with Multiple Imputation on the Determinants of Civil Conflict Onset ...................................................................................................................................... 118
4.3 Media Interaction and Predicted Probabilities of Civil Conflict .................................................. 120
4.4 Controlled Experiment: Guinea (1999) and Tajikistan (2002) ....................................................... 130
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

General Augusto Pinochet's neo-fascist control of Chile from 1973 to 1990 is one of the most reviled regimes in modern history. After a successful military coup to overthrow the socialist Allende regime, the Pinochet-led junta undertook a multi-pronged plan to establish control over the Chilean state and people (Remmer 1980). While the human rights abuses and "disappearances" are well-documented, the more passive, yet no less insidious, thought control strategy is less researched.

Immediately after seizing power in 1973, the Pinochet regime filled the airwaves and newspapers with propaganda (Childress 2008; 85). Television and radio programming was dominated by military official ribbon-cutting events, Pinochet speeches, military parades, and anti-Communist rhetoric (Spooner 1991; Childress 2008; Bresnahan 2002). Newspapers actively assisted the Pinochet regime (Tironi and Sunkel 2000). A former editor at El Mercurio, a major Chilean broadsheet, recounts its role during the Pinochet regime as "critical collaborator" (Childress 2008). Regardless, the Pinochet regime appointed a censor at every media outlet to prevent the publication or broadcast of information that contradicted the dictatorship to maintain control (Childress 2008).

Unexpected political and social changes began to occur in 1986. Tironi and Sunkel (2000) suggest these changes began with creation of a leftist newspaper and the end of the Pinochet regime's mass media monopoly. For the first time since 1973, the Chilean people could consume information beyond the tightly controlled pinochetista filters. Chile's media-centered
political growth continued as the opposition party was granted 15 minutes of airtime a week on national television to discuss its platform (Childress 2008). Both of these media outlets enjoyed large Chilean patronage. Just two years later, 1990, the overwhelming "No" vote in the national referendum removed Pinochet from power.

The Pinochet-led Chile case raises an interesting research question, "what role does mass media play in the likelihood of political opposition"? This example anecdotally suggests when Pinochet's regime maintained a tight control over mass media, media reports that questioned the regime's policies or offered a platform for the political opposition's politics were banned. Political opposition to Pinochet remained low during this time period. However, when the regime lost control of the media institution and countervailing media messages were being released, new information entered Chilean politics information sphere. The Chilean people were able to consume these new, anti-Pinochet regime messages and support for political opposition increased dramatically. This Chilean people movement culminated in the “No” vote that removed Pinochet from the Presidency.

The type of information available to the Chilean people appears to be an important factor in the rise of political opposition to Pinochet. The media message mix changed from solely pro-regime to a combination of pro- and anti-regime when the regime lost control of the media. With the media's introduction of anti-regime information, new perceptions of the Pinochet regime and political opinions were formed minds of the Chilean people. Political scientists generally suggest that even a partially free press can serve as an information source on and a rallying point for anti-incumbent regime politics (Levitsky and Way 2000). But, this analysis glosses over the fundamental actor in the political opposition process: the individual.

At some point, the Chilean citizen had to calculate the risks of acting against the Pinochet
regime, decide, and behave accordingly. The type of information available to the Chilean citizen appears important; only when the regime's grip on the media loosened and new messages entered the information nexus did average citizens begin to consider and politically act against the regime. While Pinochet's removal from power occurred at the ballot box, most authoritarian leaders do not enjoy a similar bloodless ouster. Rather, many autocratic and anocratic regimes suffer the loss of power from a civil conflict. However, the civil conflict literature has only tangentially explored the relationship between mass media and the decision of a noncombatant to become a rebel. As the Pinochet-led Chile example suggests, media offers exciting institutional, informational, and mobilization research avenues. This dissertation seeks to close this gap in the civil conflict literature by examining the role mass media plays in a prospective rebel’s decision to become an actual rebel.

THE PROSPECTIVE REBEL AND THE DECISION TO REBEL

The question why does an average citizen become a rebel enthralls politicians, bureaucrats, and political scientists alike. Predicting the factors that propel noncombatants to take up arms and create or join a rebel group has significant implications. If state leaders or bureaucrats can anticipate the conditions that lead to domestic strife, they can work to prevent it or prepare to combat it. This has foreign policy and business implications, as well. If domestic strife can be predicted, foreign leaders, bureaucrats, and multinational corporations would be able to take early action to protect or enhance their international interests. The question, why do some individuals rebel and while others do not, has significant and practical implications beyond academia.

Volumes have been written that examine where, when, and why rebellions are most
likely to occur. However, at the most basic level, all rebellions require an individual to decide to create or join a rebel group. Here in lies the problem: while people may be destitute, starving, ethnically or ideologically subjugated, or suffer political violence at the hands of the regime, it is dangerous to become a rebel. Rebels are treasonous. No government, regardless of regime type, takes treason lightly. Rebels are hunted by the regime's military and state police. If rebels are caught, the can expect, at a minimum, a prison sentence. However, in many states, treasonous activity promises prospective rebels torture and death.

Even if regime change is universally desired in a society, each individual would prefer to enjoy the fruits of a successful rebellion while allowing someone else to bear the costs and risks of fighting. In short, a collective action problem exists that prevents rebellion. And, so, unpopular regimes are tolerated by unsatisfied populations. Yet, sometimes noncombatants set down their pitchforks and pick up guns. Why do some individuals choose rebellion and others not?

When a person makes a decision, any decision, an internal calculus occurs. In most cases, this calculus is instantaneous and the process itself goes unobserved by the individual. For individuals considering rebellion, here forth referred to as the prospective rebel, the calculus is made up of at least two considerations: the costs to fight the incumbent regime and the benefits to rebel. Being shielded from state-sponsored political violence, provided food and shelter beyond that of remaining a noncombatant, and gaining to the ability plunder local villages are all benefits associated with joining a rebellion. These as well as other reasons can be powerful attractions for prospective rebels.

These benefits are weighed against the struggles of fighting and the risks therein. The risks may include imprisonment, a crippling and maiming, torture, and death. When an
individual considers joining a rebellion, he or she certainly gives thought to the difficulty of the fight. Like a boxer deciding to accept a match, the size, strength, reach, and history of the opponent are all important factors for consideration. Similar to the boxer's calculus, a regime's capabilities affect a prospective rebel's decision to rebel. A regime with a strong military and/or an effective state police force would doubtlessly increase the risks of rebellion. The stronger the regime's capabilities, the greater the cost for a prospective rebel to fight the regime. In sum, as regimes' abilities to combat rebel groups vary, so too do the costs that prospective rebels face when considering rebellion.

DETERRENCE, PERCEPTION, AND SOURCES OF INFORMATION

For a prospective rebel, a regime's capability to fight the rebel group is a deterrent. By presenting significant costs to the prospective rebel, a regime with "high" capabilities will deter him or her from rebellion. However, the existence of "high" capabilities does not automatically deter the prospective rebel from rebellion. Rather, information is fundamental for the deterrence effect to function properly.

For a moment, imagine two countries, A and B, agree to sign a defensive alliance to deter a third country, C, from attacking. Yet, country C will only be deterred if it knows the defensive alliance between countries A and B exists. If A and B sign an alliance but keep it in secret, C will not be deterred and it will attack. Moreover, C's knowledge is key for the deterrence effect to function as theorized.

Similar to country C, a prospective rebel must know the regime possesses "high" capabilities for him or her to be deterred from rebellion. Yet, is it reasonable to assume that states and individuals possess equal information abilities? Bueno de Mesquita, Morrow, and
Zorrick (1997) suggest that state leaders both know and understand their inter-state opponent's capabilities. However, prospective rebels are average citizens and do not enjoy the same information resources as state leaders. Does a young man residing in the periphery department of Morazán know the El Salvadoran junta's military and police capabilities when making his rebellion decision? Along with most of the average citizens worldwide, it is probably safe to assume that his rebellion calculus is not made with complete information of the regime’s capabilities.

Noncombatants have incomplete information on regime capabilities. Unlike the state leader, the average prospective rebel does not possess entire state apparatuses to determine and analyze information on his or her incumbent regime. Yet, we can imagine that possessing incomplete information on regime capabilities influences the prospective rebel's rebellion calculus. With limited information, a prospective rebel can make the misguided rebellion decision. Limited information on the regime's capabilities allows an individual to choose rebellion when caution is advised or vice versa.

The more information a prospective rebel has on regime capabilities to calculate, the more correct the rebellion decision. Three sources of information are available which can educate prospective rebels on regime capabilities: personal experience, interpersonal discussion, and mass media. While all three sources inculcate, they each provide different levels of information on state capacity.

Defined as witnessing something first hand, personal experience provides individuals relative understanding of the thing or event. However, personal experience alone is only completely instructive in the rarest of cases. For example, after learning to drive a car, does a person know how cars run or how they are made? No, the individual gains a small level of
information on one aspect on a very large and diverse concept. Similar to the driver, the average prospective rebel may see local armed troops, armored transport, and state police forces, but has no real concept of the regime's aggregate strength or effectiveness from these personal experiences.

People often encounter new ideas and information through conversations with others. By sharing their personal experiences, discussants can glean new information on a new or less-known thing, event, or idea. It is easy to imagine two prospective rebels conversing about a regime's military strength or state police capabilities. On the surface, interpersonal discussion appears to be a significant source of information on regime capabilities. Yet, like personal experience, the information shared is bound to the discussants’ experiences. As personal experience tends to yield limited information on the regime's capabilities, so too does interpersonal discussion.

Finally, people use mass media as a resource for information. Mass media provides a window for people to gain information about the world beyond their neighborhoods that they are unlikely to know otherwise. Unlike personal experience and interpersonal discussion, mass media is a medium that can disseminate largely unknowable information to potentially vast sectors of society. News stories on military strength and developments, investigative journalism pieces on disappearances, and editorials that level praise or criticism on the regime all inform prospective rebels beyond snapshot information provided the other two mediums. In sum, mass media provides prospective rebels with a significant level of information with which to understand the costs to fight and calculate the rebellion decision.
CONTROLLED INFORMATION: THE PROPOSED PACIFYING EFFECT OF PRO-REGIME INFORMATION

A prospective rebel's calculus in only as good as the information he or she possesses. Again, prospective rebels never actually "know" the regime's actual capabilities as they hold incomplete information. Rather, the costs to fight the regime are perceptions constructed by the prospective rebel from information sources. Mass media serves as a significant source of information on regime capabilities with prospective rebels can use to form these perceptions. However, the mass media institution is not necessarily a neutral, unbiased information source. Prospective rebels may receive biased information which complicates their rebellion calculus.

A regime's political interests influence the nature of the mass media institution. The level of political influence, and subsequent media freedom, varies across states. As regimes possess sovereign control over the mass media institution, mass media is only as free as the regime allows. The opportunities to undertake investigative journalism on military developments, print editorials, and levy critiques on state policies and practices are not universally permitted. The regime shapes what qualifies as news and the types of messages mass media is able to release.

A "high" level of media constraint has a trickle-down effect on the prospective rebel who is dependent on mass media for regime capabilities information. The prospective rebel may be consuming mis-information as the availability of information on regime capabilities can be suppressed, biased, or both by the regime. This can have a dramatic effect on the prospective rebel's rebellion calculus.

When regimes like Pinochet's Chile tightly control the mass media institution, all mass media outlets invariably report very homogenized, pro-regime content. Military parades, speeches, and ribbon-cutting events illustrate the infallibility, the strength, and the 'goodness' of the regime. Here in lies the prospective rebel's problem: how does he or she separate bias from
The confluence of the regime's control of media content and the dependence on media for regime capabilities information presents a significant dilemma for the prospective rebel. It becomes exceptionally difficult to delineate facts from propaganda when people are dependent on an information source and are unable to determine the validity of the reports. With no countervailing message as all outlets report similar content, the information-dependent prospective rebel is likely to accept these messages as his or her own opinion regardless if they are biased.

The Chilean population challenge to the Pinochet regime correlates with the regime's level of mass media control. The lack of a challenge by the Chilean population from 1973 to 1985 appears related to Pinochet's control of the mass media institution. By limiting media freedom to pro-regime information, the messages and content available to Chilean prospective rebels to calculate the costs to rebel was skewed heavily in favor of the Pinochet's regime.

Regimes can use mass media to manufacture a more grandiose image of themselves in the minds of prospective rebels. Omniscience, infallibility, omnipresence, universal support, and an undefeatable military are but some of the message cues that regimes employ mass media to print and transmit to their populations. The bombardment of these messages affects prospective rebels' perceptions of the regime when these are the lone cues available to consume. Prospective rebels know no different; they are ignorant to the regime's "real" capability levels as no countervailing information exists. Consequently, these messages must be true. The resigned acceptance of these messages manufactures a pacifying agent in the prospective rebels. The perception of the cost to rebel becomes so great that the benefits to rebel cannot offset.

A prospective rebel's rebellion calculus with skewed information may look something
like the following questions. How can a rebel group hide me when the regime's state police is omniscient? When the regime is unbeatable and armed with advanced weaponry, how can the rebel group hope to be successful; how can I hope to survive? How likely will I remain anonymous in my assistance to the rebel group when so many people love the regime; will I be found out? What a prospective rebel believes, how a prospective rebel perceives the regime’s capabilities is fundamentally important in the rebellion calculus process. When the prospective rebel accepts the pro-regime information as his or her own perception, prospective rebels are likely to calculate that remaining a noncombatant is the preferred decision. While remaining subjugated to some degree is not preferential, a prospective rebel certainly prefers it as compared to the belief of near-certain torture or death.

**MOVING FORWARD: A CALL FOR RESEARCH**

Taking cues from the correlative relationship between media control and regime challenge in the Pinochet Chile example, this dissertation examines the role mass media plays in a prospective rebel's rebellion calculus. Mass media offers an intriguing theoretical argument which has been under-explored by the existing civil conflict literature. First, mass media allows civil conflict scholars to set aside the assumption that prospective rebels maintain complete information on the regime's capabilities and further explore the rebellion calculus from an information perspective. Prospective rebel's information on the regime's military strength or the ability to locate and repress is neither complete nor absolute. Rather, a noncombatant's understanding is limited in scope and susceptible to outside influence.

Mass media presents an informational bridge between the regime's capabilities and the prospective rebel's rebellion calculus. To be clear, it is impossible to completely determine what
each civilian knows and its effect on each rebellion calculi short of a survey design approach. However, mass media provides researchers the ability to construct a better, more reality-tailored theory which can account for incomplete information and the potential for outside misinformation influence.

Second, mass media has the potential to serve as a new regime capability dimension. Mass media is not simply an information medium; it can shape opinions and behavior. If the incumbent regime can control the information available to the population, it can coopt and control the message content and definition of newsworthiness. An information sphere dominated by intentional bias and misinformation combined with prospective rebel limited information and media dependence suggests a skewed rebellion calculus. If noncombatants believe the incumbent regime is infallible and omnipotent, they will calculate, decide, and behave accordingly. A tightly controlled mass media institution allows the regime to dominate the information sphere. Moreover, the bombardment of pro-regime information can fabricate a skewed calculus and consequently a pacified population.

The dissertation is divided into five chapters. Chapter II examines the existing research on state capacity, a prospective rebel's rebellion calculus, and the role mass media serves as an information medium. Chapter III hypothesizes on the effects mass media access and freedom have on civil conflict onset. Chapter IV proposes a research design, method, and tests the hypotheses. Chapter V discusses the findings and concludes the dissertation by offering directions for future research.
CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter presents the literature necessary to lay the foundation for this research’s theory and methodology. Several literatures must be reviewed in order to properly address the gaps in the literature and research puzzle. First, I review the civil conflict literature with specific attention to the state capacity thesis. Next, I highlight a particular gap in the state capacity theoretical argument: the information assumption. Finally, I explore nontraditional literatures such as psychology, political psychology, and political communication for clues to the prospective rebel information dilemma.

CIVIL CONFLICT, STATE CAPACITY, AND THE PROSPECTIVE REBEL

The research question of when and why a prospective rebel decides to join a rebel group continues to be a prominent research topic in the conflict literature. In general, the civil conflict onset literature can be categorized by Most and Starr’s (1989) two distinct dimensions, opportunity and willingness. However, the literature has focused more on the willingness than that of the opportunity dimension (Sobek 2010). The greed and grievance literary debate typifies the civil conflict literature’s commitment to the willingness research agenda. However, a recent research trend suggests that a transition from the willingness to the opportunity dimension is underway. Recent analysis has focused on the structural dynamics that can encourage and discourage prospective rebels to undertake civil violence. Scholars in this research vein have identified state capacity as an important structural dynamic for further examination.
In the broadest sense, state capacity dictates the opportunity for a prospective rebel to undertake civil violence strategies against the regime. First generation scholars identified relationships between certain state characteristics and the likelihood of civil conflict. The foundations of the state capacity thesis are seen in research by Gurr (1970) and Huntington (1968). Gurr (1970) assesses what dynamics increase the likelihood of civil conflict in a state. Gurr contends that civil conflict is more likely to occur in states where order is maintained through coercive force than the provision of ‘value-satisfying’ policies or actions (Gurr 1970: 317). Cooptation is an important factor on the likelihood of civil conflict. In short, Gurr finds that civil conflict onset is more likely when a state does not respond to or mollify its population's demands. Similar to Gurr, Huntington (1968) theorizes that civil conflict stems from a regime’s inability to govern. Categorized by capability to govern, Huntington identifies two state types: civic and praetorian. On one hand, civic states have a low likelihood of civil conflict as the state responsibly governs with an open and participatory government with significant institutionalization. On the other hand, praetorian states are more likely to experience civil conflict as these regimes offer little opportunity for societal civic participation. Huntington concludes that the demand for greater institutional participation and transparency fuels rebellion.

Drawing conclusions from Gurr and Huntington, the more politically inclusive a regime, the lower the incentive for prospective rebels join a rebel group. However, as Hegre et al (2001) concludes, the most repressive regimes experience very few civil conflicts as well. State capacity dynamics beyond civic transparency and institutionalization affect the likelihood of civil conflict. Exploring this puzzle, second generation opportunity scholars have found that the likelihood of civil conflict is determined by three conceptual dimensions of state capacity which are: 1) the level of political institution inclusiveness (Hegre et al 2001; De Nardo 1985; Muller
and Weede 1990), 2) military strength operationalized by funding (Henderson and Singer 2000) or the number of personnel (Walter 2006; Balch-Lindsay and Enterline 2000; Balch-Lindsay, Enterline, and Joyce 2008), and 3) bureaucratic/administrative capacity (Fearon and Laitin 2003; DeRouen and Sobek 2004; Hendrix 2010; Hendrix and Young 2014). An examination of these three conceptual dimensions demonstrates the development of the state capacity thesis.

Hegre et al (2001), Muller and Weede (1990), and DeNardo (1985) find that an inverted-U relationship between political institution and civil conflict onset. Imagining absolute inclusiveness and repression as polar opposites on the political spectrum, highly democratic and autocratic regimes both enjoy low likelihoods of civil conflict. On one hand, political institutions that offer transparency and inclusiveness provide opportunities for citizens to peacefully air their grievances. The political institution incorporates mechanisms for prospective rebels to change the status quo and violent strategies become less attractive and unnecessary. On the other hand, highly repressive states use coercive force to control their populations which makes it difficult for rebellion to transpire (e.g. Zanger 2000). Hegre et al (2001) aptly phrases the autocratic peace as “the peace of a zoo”. However, the middle polities do not offer the levels of inclusion to co-opt or the levels of repression to deter prospective rebels. Hence, the middle polities, termed anocracies, are shown to experience the highest likelihood of civil conflict (Hegre et al 2001).

The idea of challenging a state military that is well funded with advanced weaponry (Henderson and Singer 2000) or has a large number of personnel (e.g. Walter 2006; Balch-Lindsay and Enterline 2000; Balch-Lindsay, Enterline, and Joyce 2008) would be daunting for a prospective rebel. Here, the greater the regime’s military strength, the lower the likelihood a rebellion occurs. As Lichbach (1995) suggests, the rational prospective rebel would not join a
rebellion when an extremely high costs exists. When the regime possesses significant military strength, prospective rebels are deterred from creating or joining a rebel group as the costs to win are extremely high.

Military strength is not the only capability that can deter rebellion. Fearon and Laitin (2003) and DeRouen and Sobek (2004) show that rebellion can also be deterred by a highly professionalized state bureaucracy. The state capacity literature broadly defines bureaucratic capacity as the ability to collect and manage information (Hendrix 2010). Here, the more professionalized a state’s bureaucracy, the better it is able to monitor the population and identify both who the rebels are and where they reside (Hendrix 2010). An effective bureaucracy makes the formation of a rebel group extremely difficult to accomplish (Hendrix and Young 2014). For example, the holding of secret meetings and the recruiting of new supporters becomes demonstrably more difficult as the breadth and depth of a repressive state police force grows. Bureaucratic capacity affords a nuanced and powerful tool to efficiently and effectively engage rebels. Like military strength, prospective rebels are deterred from joining or creating a rebel group when a regime has an effective bureaucracy as the cost of rebellion is significant.

The decision to rebel is not solely determined by the willingness of an individual to engage in political violence. Rather, a regime's level of political inclusiveness, strength, and effectiveness plays an influential role as well. Regimes that possess effective bureaucracies, strong militaries, and highly inclusive or exclusive political institutions present a significant hurdle for the prospective rebel. Given these costs, the prospective rebel would be deterred from rebellion.
A fundamental problem in the state capacity theoretical argument is the assumed link between the regime's level of state capacity and the prospective rebel's knowledge of this level. For much of the state capacity literature, the prospective rebel is assumed to possess two informational abilities. The prospective rebel is assumed to both “know” and be able to delineate “strong” versus “weak” state capacity levels. The importance of this information assumption cannot be understated as it acts as the glue in the state capacity thesis' theoretical argument. By assuming complete information, the prospective rebel has knowledge of the state capacity levels and any/all behavioral effects can be directly linked to these structural factors. If the prospective rebel does not have knowledge of the regime's capacity level or is unable to delineate "strong" versus "weak" regimes, the state capacity thesis' deterrence causality fails. The prospective rebels must know and be able to separate "strong" versus "weak" regimes for the state capacity thesis to function.

Of course, the complete information assumption seems to fit with Bueno de Mesquita, Morrow, and Zorick's (1997) suggestion that state military capabilities are common knowledge. While these assumptions may be true for state leaders, how portable are they for the average noncombatant? The information abilities differ starkly between state leaders and average citizens. The average prospective rebel does not have access to similar state apparatuses to collect and assess information on possible opponents. On the contrary, information on regime's capacity(s) is limited for prospective rebels.

Recent research on state capacity has acknowledged the disconnect between the complete information assumption and the prospective rebel's actual informational ability. By introducing the perception of rebellion success into the prospective rebel calculus, several scholars attempt to
better mirror reality (e.g. Young 2009; Regan and Norton 2005). The prospective rebel's rebellion calculus is not undertaken with complete information on the regime's capacity, rather, it is drawn from incomplete information. Here, the perception of rebellion success factor accounts for the prospective rebel's limited information on state capacity.

A prospective rebel’s perception of the state’s capacity level impacts his or her calculus, decision, and ultimate revolutionary behavior. Regardless if the state actually possesses strong or weak capabilities, if a prospective rebel believes that the state is “strong” or “weak”, this perception has a fundamental effect on the ultimate decision. However, the theoretical arguments explaining where and how prospective rebel form state capacity perceptions remain under-developed. The next section teases out questions on the prospective rebel perceptual process. Looking to nontraditional literatures, I explore the psychology discipline and political psychology sub-field for clues on how prospective rebel perceptions are formed.

PERCEPTION: BEYOND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Perception plays a significant role, explicitly or implicitly, in conflict research. Noncombatant perceptions underscore much of the civil conflict literature’s explanations on individual participation in rebel groups. For example, an individual’s perception on the likely success of a revolt is explicitly factored into the decision whether to rebel or not (De Nardo 1985). Tangential to the perception of rebellion success, individual perceptions on the state’s military strength is evident in the civil conflict literature as well. Heath et al (2000) theorizes on an individual’s decision to join a rebel group. Here, a prospective rebel’s perception on the ability of the rebel group to shield participants from state repression affects the decision to join a rebel group. Said in a different way, the prospective rebel’s perception of the power asymmetry
between the rebel group and regime shapes the decision to rebel.

The civil conflict literature has aptly incorporated individual perceptions into the decision to join a rebel group. However, the discussion on how and where prospective rebels form state capacity perceptions is under-examined. If the civil conflict literature acknowledges that perceptions are important dynamics in the participation calculus, *ex ante* questions on perception formation clearly are necessary. Looking to the psychology discipline and the political psychology and political communication sub-fields, I find important clues as to how perceptions form as well as the resulting impacts on the decision-making process and behavioral outcomes.

Perception is defined as the interpretation of sensory information that attempts to make sense of some person, object, idea, or event (Gregory 1997; 1998). While many theories on perception formation exist in the cognitive psychology literature, Bruner and Goodman’s (1947) and Bruner and Postman’s (1946) perceptual process findings are foundational in this sub-field. For international relations scholars, this theory will be familiar as Jervis’ (1968; 1976; 1988) work on perception and misperception in war and Tetlock’s (1983) “cognitive miser image” of the individual research each liberally borrow from these cognitive psychology conclusions.

According to Bruner and Goodman’s and Bruner and Postman’s research, perceptions are formed through a three-step process. The perceptual process begins when an individual is introduced to a new idea, actor, or object. This "thing" strikes the person’s interest and he or she wishes to learn more about it. Second, the individual seeks more information to make sense of the new discovery. At some point in this information-seeking step, the individual recognizes similar or already understood dynamics and categorizes the new discovery. Finally, these categorizations crystalize and the image of the idea, actor, or object takes shape in the individual’s mind. A perception of the "thing" has formed for the individual. Applying this
process to the prospective rebel, perceptions of the benefits of rebellion, the cost to fight the regime, and the likelihood of success all serve as information for the rebellion calculus. But, how and where do prospective rebels gather information to form these perceptions?

INFORMATION SOURCES, THE PROSPECTIVE REBEL, AND REGIME CAPACITY PERCEPTION

For Bruner and Goodman’s and Bruner and Postman’s model, the investigation into the new discovery is the key mechanism into perception formulation. Individuals gather at least some level of information on the state's capacity to form a perception. A major gap in the state capacity literature, even the research that includes a perception factor in the calculus, is the question of where prospective rebel information. If we assume that civilians maintain limited information, the obvious question becomes, "where do prospective rebels get their information"? Thinking critically, a civilian can gain state capacity information from at least three sources: personal experience, interpersonal discussion, and mass media.

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

The most obvious source of information is an individual's personal experience. An individual can form some rudimentary perception of the regime’s military strength by witnessing it firsthand. Best case scenario, an individual served in the military or worked in the regime's bureaucracy. This type of prior experience makes him or her a special knowledge individual. A special knowledge individual is one that has advanced knowledge of the regime or military beyond that of the average individual. Excluding states that maintain mandatory conscription, this percentage of the population is assuredly rather small. Beyond former employment, we can imagine that an individual who resides near a military installation or who has witnessed military parades/ceremonies would have a more crystallized image of military capabilities. These
individuals could witness regiments of soldiers marching in lock-step formation, troops transport capabilities, tanks and mechanized armaments, and any number of other weapons. Through personal experiences, an individual can have some understanding on the type of weapons the regime’s military has available to it and begin to gauge its level of professionalization and/or its possession of advanced weaponry.

On the other hand, it is easy to believe that the average individual, for instance an individual in a rural area, has little to no experience with the regime’s military. The extent of state military strength understanding may be as simple as “the state has men with guns”, but how does the prospective rebel make a power comparison when an existing rebel group also has “men with guns”? When relying on personal experience for militarized actor comparisons, juxtapositions on professionalization, size, and type/advancement of weaponry are exceptionally difficult to make unless they are special knowledge individuals. For the vast majority of individuals relying on personal experience, the strength of the state’s military is largely uncrystallized and indeterminate pictures in their minds.

This of course says nothing of personal experience with bureaucratic capacity. Bureaucratic capacity to deter rebellion often comes in the form of state-sponsored repression (Hendrix and Young 2014). Personal or familial experience with state-sponsored repression would raise an individual’s estimation on the effectiveness of the regime’s bureaucracy at finding potential enemies of the state. However, a regime directly represses an entire population in only the rarest of circumstances. In sum, personal experience with the state military and bureaucratic capacity can only be a minorly instructive information source for the population at large. In most cases, the average individual does not have enough interaction with a regime’s military or a state police to characterize the state as “strong” or “weak” in his or her mind.
INTERPERSONAL DISCUSSION

Noncombatants can gain new information on state capacity through interpersonal discussion. By sharing personal experiences, discussants can get new information which further crystallizes their perceptions on the state's capacity by sharing personal experiences. However, unless one of the discussants is a special knowledge individual, only minimal knowledge will be gained from the shared experiences. Like the personal experience medium, a discussion on state capacity is bound to an individual's experiences knowledge and would be little more educational than one's own personal experiences.

MASS MEDIA

Mass media presents a significant piece to the prospective rebel state capacity perception puzzle. Mass media is a primary source for people to consume information about events beyond their daily lives. Lippmann (1922) argues that mass media provides a window for people “see” beyond their daily lives and gain knowledge about the world that they could not know otherwise. Mass media fills a prospective rebel's knowledge void on state capacity that could not be satisfied otherwise.

Mass media provides information on the incumbent regime's military strength and bureaucratic effectiveness that the average citizen could otherwise not know. Newspaper articles and editorials, radio broadcasts, and television reports can all provide information from all corners of the state to all corners of the state. From trials of captured accused to military parades, media provides a mechanism for civilians to form a nuanced, crystallized perception of state capacity. Mass media can help shape a prospective rebel's image of the military as “strong” or “weak” and the bureaucracy as “effective” or “incapable” by providing and describing likely unavailable information. In sum, the ability to broadcast or present this information to large
sectors of society demonstrates the massive effect media can have on an entire population’s perception of the state.

Stark differences can be observed on the ability to crystallize perceptions when comparing mass media and the other two information mediums. Generally speaking, the personal experience and interpersonal discussion sources are low information mediums with limited dissemination. This is especially true for personal experience. The witnessing of relevant events and the holding of conversations on state capacity are operationally small compared to the broadcast of mass media messages. Mass media, on the other hand, is a medium that can disseminate largely unknowable information to potentially large sectors of society. Unlike personal experience and interpersonal discussion, mass media offers information beyond the average individual’s perceptual process; information-consumers gain perceptions on a state’s capacity beyond their sensory bubble.

MEDIA EFFECT AND THE PROSPECTIVE REBEL

Media often serves as the central intermediary between the government and the citizenry (Curran 2000). Consequently, people are largely dependent on mass media for political information (Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur 1976). Mass media creates a lens for people to perceive their unseen environment and form opinions. Ultimately, behavior is patterned from perceptions derived from media. Moreover, media serves as a information guide; mass media affects an individual's social reality understanding and perception formation.

Until this point, mass media has been considered solely an information source. On the contrary, Nelson et al (1997), Druckman (2001), Zaller (1992; 1996) amongst other political communication scholars show that mass media influences political perceptions and opinions. By
filtering what is newsworthy and highlighting certain messages cues, mass media serves as a news mediator between the political world and the information-dependent individual. This mediating role allows media to interpret a political event or dynamic for the media consumer (Zaller 1992; 1996). Mass media acts as a news gatekeeper and content mediator; the reception of certain cues, or information that highlights specific messages, can influence political opinions (Cook 2005).

A prominent media effect process is Zaller's (1992) Receive Accept Sample (RAS) Model. Zaller contends that opinion change occurs through a two-step process. First, the individual receives the media message. Second, the individual considers accepting or rejecting this message as his or her new or updated political opinion. The information in the new media message is weighed against the individual's existing political knowledge and perceptions. For Zaller's RAS Model, a new message must fit the with the individual's existing political opinions for it to be accepted. However, if the topic is uncrystallized, media cues can change political opinions easier as the existing political opinions are in flux (Bartels 1993).

The RAS Model finds that public opinion will diverge along partisan lines when contrasting political messages are received. However, an underlying assumption in the RAS Model is that the contrasting media messages possess equal visibility and accessibility. It is easy to imagine that one media message is likely to be "louder", or the level of intensity is greater, than other media messages in non-democratic regimes. Zaller (1996) accounts for asymmetrical message intensity in his crossover effect model. Here, the author contends that the level of media message intensity impacts an individual's message reception and the likelihood of acceptance. Individuals are both more likely to receive and accept the "louder" media message cue than one of the "softer" rival messages. The crossover effect model concludes that
individuals are more prone to accept the new, "louder" media message as their own political opinion despite their political predispositions.

Mass media can affect an individual's political perceptions and opinions. However, media does not operate in a bubble; structural interests influence the nature of mass media in a state. The next section explores the relationship between the state and media.

**MASS MEDIA AND THE REGIME**

Mass media differs from the other sources of information in a distinct way. Personal experience and interpersonal discussion spread information through individual understanding and conversations. Cook (2005) argues that mass media is much larger in socio-political scope than individual or organizational spread of information. Mass media has a defined social pattern of behavior with procedural and routine assumptions that preside universal over the societal sector which fits with Huntington and Dominguez’s (1975) definition of ‘institution’ (Cook 2005: 84). Mass media is not simply a coalescence of independent news decisions. On the contrary, the prescribed newsworthiness method, news content consensus, and the official-public dependency for dissemination-reception of information suggests that mass media is a political institution (Cook 2005).

Mass media is not an isolated institution; rather, it is shaped by the sovereign power of the regime. Cook (2005) finds the regime impacts media in two particular ways: the definition of newsworthiness and the type of media content. Often times, most particularly in western democracies, mass media is thought of as the watchdog or the sentinel that guards against national government corruption, abuses of power, or the encroachment on societies’ civil liberties (e.g. Dahl 1971; Coppedge and Reinicke 1999; Gurevitch and Blumler 1990; Curran
This is largely the Liberal Theory view of media (e.g. Moravcsik 1997) and can be traced as early as de Tocqueville’s “Liberty of the Press in the United States” (1984 [1835]). However, mass media’s role is not always that of the watchdog; whereas the state defines the mass media institution's nature.

Cook (2005) argues that mass media is a political institution in all states, regardless of regime type. The definition of newsworthiness and the type of content permitted varies as the level of regime involvement in the mass media institution changes. In some regimes, media is used to assert the state’s military strength, the omniscience of the bureaucracy, and infallibility of the leaders. For example, recall the El Mercurio editor’s comments on the relationship between the newspaper and the Pinochet regime in Chapter I. The Chilean media largely collaborated with the Pinochet regime and was used as a propaganda device. On the other hand, some states are expressly laissez faire with mass media. These states afford the mass media institution freedom to define what is newsworthy and the content of the messages. As noted above, western democracies demonstrate this type of state-mass media institutional relationship.

The effect that regimes have on mass media institutions is not uniform. On the contrary, the way regimes shape mass media institutions varies globally. However, regime influence is not the only difference between mass media institutions. It is important to delineate and categorize mass media institutions as they can have divergent effects on their information-dependent populations. The next section examines the media system literature for global mass media institution categorization.
MEDIA SYSTEM: GLOBALLY DEFINING MASS MEDIA

Media system is generally defined as a state's political communication culture (Esser and Pfetsch 2004). The effect media has on people varies as it functions in different ways across states. Often times, media systems are defined by the Liberal Theory good governance standards; does state afford media independence or not. This is evident from Dahl's polyarchy description to Vultee's (2009) discussion on the relationship between media freedom and democratic peace. Clearly, the level of constraint on the mass media institution by the state is an important factor when defining media system. However, several dimensions, one of which is level of media freedom, make up and define a media system. This section discusses two prominent media system definitions in the comparative political communication literature.

Hallin and Mancini (2004) propose four dimensions define a mass media institution and provide a means to categorize them into one of the three media system types. The mass media institution dimensions are: 1) the development of a mass circulation press, 2) the degree and nature of the links between media and political parties, 3) the development of journalistic professionalism, and 4) the degree and nature of state intervention in the media system (Hallin and Mancini 2004; 21). Based on the varying levels of these four dimensions, mass media institutions are categorized into three media system types which are: the Liberal Model, the Democratic Corporatist Model, and the Polarized Pluralist Model.

While Hallin and Mancini's media system model is one of the most cited, it presents several theoretical and replication problems. First, Hallin and Mancini's media system model requires extensive historical analysis of each mass media institution's development (2004; 14). While the qualitative results from such a research program would be subtle and nuanced, it poses a serious problem for large-n media system analyses. Second, Hallin and Mancini admit that
states often display characteristics of more than one model. Media system analysis becomes unduly complicated and produces blurred results when the Model categories are not definitive. Third, the authors offer a media system categorization based only on Western Europe and North America mass media institutions. However, Hallin and Mancini’s media system categories are based on the historical research of people and states with highly similar socio-cultural and political histories. Mass media institutions outside of Western Europe and North America that developed with different histories may not fit nicely into the existing types. Consequently, Hallin and Mancini’s media systems types cannot be considered a global media system model, rather, a supra-regional one.

Norris’ (2004) media system model begins with the Liberal Theory’s assumption that a free press is necessary for social and political development (e.g. Dahl 1989). However, she argues that the governance concept does not adequately categorize the differences between media systems. For example, while the mass media institutions are largely independent from state interference in both the Philippines and the United States, they are clearly different along other conceptual divides.

The level of media freedom represents the types of messages available to consumers, however, it misses a crucial dimension when taken alone: the ability to consume media messages. Norris finds that any media system theory that does not contemplate a level of access dimension is an incomplete mass media institution categorization. When categorizing mass media institutions solely by level of media freedom, media messages are assumed to be equally consumed. Juxtaposing Mongolia and the United Kingdom illustrates the inaccuracy of this assumption. For example, it is easy to imagine that Mongolian and British peoples have substantially different level of media access despite both being free mass media institutions.
The level of media access, the number of radios, televisions, and newspapers in a state, importantly represents the population's ability to receive the media messages. In short, Norris contends that the greater availability of media resources, the more likely a media message will have an effect on the population at large.

Norris hypothesizes that mass media institutions should be categorized by two dimensions: the level of media freedom and the level of media access. Mass media institutions are categorized into one of the four media system types based on "high" or "low" levels of the two dimensions. Figure 2.1 illustrates Norris’ media system typology in a 2 x 2 matrix which are: the Widespread Access and Free Press Model, the Limited Access and Free Press Model, the Widespread Access and Nonfree Press Model, and the Limited Access and Nonfree Press Model.

The author concludes that each Model yields a different level of media effect on the population. First, the Widespread Access and Free Press includes mass media institutions that are independent from state intervention. Here, mass media can freely report on social problems,
public concerns, and present calls for governmental accountability. And, these media messages are able to be consumed by large sectors of society given the widespread level of media access. Mass media in the Widespread Access and Free Press model is demonstrative of the Liberal Theory arch-type; it is an information source and government watchdog for both elites and the general public. The level of media effect is not society-wide due to the heterogeneous message mix. However, a pocketed, self-selection oriented media effect does exist (e.g. Newton 1999).

Second, it is easy to imagine that the media effect is different when limitations on press freedom and access are instituted. In the Limited Access and Free Press Model, the mass media institution is free from state constraint and has a measured effect on government accountability. However, given the limited level of access, the media effect will probably limited to society's elites. The lack of society-wide media access limits the media effect trickle-down to the general population. Moreover, mass media institutions in the Limited Access and Free Press Model minimally affect the general population's political opinions and perceptions.

Third, the objective is not the enhancement of government accountability for mass media institutions demonstrative of the Widespread Access and Nonfree Press Model. Here, the incumbent regime tightly defines what is newsworthy for and constrains the messages of mass media. Mass media serves as a regime functionary; it is a tool for pro-regime propaganda content. Given the level of state intervention, the message mix is highly homogenous. Also, as the level of media access is high, large sectors of society are bombarded with these pro-regime media messages. Media effect for mass media institutions in this Model should be significant in both society-wide breadth and individual perception formation depth (see also Chong and Druckman 2007).

Finally, fourth, mass media institutions in the Limited Access and Nonfree Press Model
are restricted in scope by the state. Like the Widespread Access and Nonfree Press Model, mass media does not serve the good governance watchdog role. However, unlike the Widespread Access and Nonfree Press Model, it is not employed as a propaganda tool. Mass media does not serve as a significant information source for the population due to the low level of media access. As such, mass media is not an effective mechanism for the regime to shape the population’s opinions. Moreover, given the combination of the general population’s low media access and the restricted media, media effect for institutions in the Limited Access and Nonfree Press Model is pro-regime but minimally so.

CONCLUSION

Chapter II discusses the existing literature necessary to address why prospective rebels decide to join rebellions. Focusing on the state capacity literature, I argue that two information problems exist. First, a significant portion of the state capacity literature assumes that prospective rebels maintain complete information on regime capabilities. This assumption serves as a crucial link in the theoretical causal mechanism; the deterrence effect will not function as theorized if prospective rebels do not know or cannot delineate "strong" versus "weak" state capacity levels. Unfortunately, this is an unrealistic assumption. Prospective rebels do not possess complete information; rather, their state capacity information is quite limited.

Second, in an attempt to address this information problem, a growing contingent of state capacity scholars has introduced perception into the prospective rebel calculus. While I applaud this decision as it better represents the prospective rebel's informational abilities, it only supplants one theoretical gap for another. If prospective rebel informational ability is limited and the rebellion calculus is based on perception, where and how do these individuals form their
perceptions? To date, the literature has under-examined the perception formation process of prospective rebels.

Chapter II questions, "where do prospective rebel perceptions come from"? To answer this question, I explore literatures traditionally unassociated with the civil conflict literature. First, the cognitive psychology literature is reviewed to determine the process of perception formation. Then, I consider where individuals gather information that forms their perceptions, specifically on state capacity. Mass media is determined to be a significant source of information. However, mass media does not neutrally crystallize perceptions and opinions, it can also shape perceptions. Finally, mass media is not a standalone institution. The media system literature finds that the level of regime involvement and the level of media access both influence the breadth and depth of media effect on a population.

The next chapter unifies many of these concepts. Here, I present a solution to the state capacity information assumption and under-developed perception theoretical argument problems. Mass media is not just an information source for prospective rebels; it is a formidable dimension of state capacity.
CHAPTER III: THEORY

Why do prospective rebels decide to rebel? The state capacity literature contends that prospective rebels base their opportunity-cost rebellion calculus on the regime's "real" or actual capability level (e.g. Hendrix 2010). I argue that state capacity is not simply military and state police capabilities; rather, it is also the regime's ability to control information through mass media. As discussed in Chapter II, the civil conflict literature has attempted to include mass media theoretical explanations into analyses on the likelihood of civil conflict onset. However, under-theorizing, under-examination, and case study portability issues have plagued existing literature. In order to move the literature forward, this dissertation offers a well-developed mass media argument that addresses these issues.

First, media cannot be treated as possessing absolute persuasion capabilities; mass media does not demonstrate a hypodermic needle effect (Lazarfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet 1944). A more theoretically informed civil conflict and mass media hypothesis needs to include a media effect mechanism that is grounded in the political communication literature. Second, the mass media institution is not the same in every country. The mass media institution is free to choose and report information in some states and is constrained by the regime in others. A well-theorized argument accounts for a mass media institution’s level of media freedom as it structurally affects the definition of newsworthiness and the content of the messages able to be reported. Third, in many instances, the existing literature makes the assumption that, because
mass media reports information, prospective rebels’ opinions are affected. While media must first exist for any media effect to occur, it is misguided to assume that because media exists it has a media effect. The variance in the ability to receive media messages is a fundamental, structural factor for media effect. It is essential to consider both a country’s and an individual prospective rebel’s ability to consume media messages when hypothesizing media's effect on likely regime capabilities perception and rebellion behavior.

The theoretical arguments presented in Chapter III seek to advance the civil conflict and mass media literature significantly forward by accounting for media effect, media freedom, and media access. By acknowledging a prospective rebel’s information on regime capabilities is incomplete, I argue that the information available to prospective rebels likely influences what perception he or she crystallizes and his or her subsequently calculated rebellion behavior. Given that mass media is a potentially unrivaled source of information on the regime’s aggregate capabilities, I propose it has a particular influence on a prospective rebel’s regime capabilities perception. Chapter III argues that, together, media freedom and media access structurally influence a prospective rebel’s level of and accuracy of information on the regime’s capability to combat a rebellion. By employing Zaller’s RAS model and crossover effect, I contend that certain prospective rebel’s regime capabilities perceptions are likely shaped as media freedom and media access covary. I conclude Chapter III by hypothesizing on mass media’s effect on the likelihood of civil conflict onset.

THE PROSPECTIVE REBEL

This chapter focuses on the prospective rebel’s rebellion decision calculus. As one might imagine, the decision to transition from a noncombatant to a traitorous rebel is a significant life-
choice. Just as in any decision, an individual looks to make an informed choice (Satz and Ferejohn 1994; Hausman 1995). Information is perhaps even more valuable to a prospective rebel given the starvation, capture, torture, maiming, and death risks associated with rebellion. Consequently, prospective rebels likely seek as much information about the regime’s capabilities as possible in order to guide their decision.

As discussed in Chapter II, prospective rebels do not possess complete or perfect information on the regime’s capabilities. Rather, prospective rebels likely base their rebellion decision calculus on the information gathered about the regime’s capabilities. It is logical to conclude that the information available to the prospective rebel probably plays a significant role in shaping how he or she perceives the regime’s capacity to combat a rebellion. The next section examines the three information sources from which prospective rebels can gather regime capabilities information and their different levels of informational utility.

**REGIME CAPABILITIES INFORMATION SOURCES**

The prospective rebel likely gathers information about the regime’s capabilities through three sources which are personal experience, interpersonal discussion, and mass media. While all three sources provide regime capabilities information, the level of information differs between them. In short, personal experience and interpersonal discussion are less informative of the regime’s aggregate capabilities than mass media.

**PERSONAL EXPERIENCE**

Personal experience generally can be defined as the information an individual witnesses through direct sensory acquisition. As an individual spends much of his or her life at home or at work, personal experience is largely bound to what occurs in an individual’s home community. ,
The likelihood an individual directly experiences some phenomenon logically decreases the farther away he or she moves from the home community. Personal experience is informative but most likely only on phenomenon in an individuals’ home community.

Applying this concept to prospective rebels, personal experience likely provides information on the regime’s strength and effectiveness in their home communities. Ranging from no interaction to daily interaction with the regime’s military and bureaucracy, a prospective rebel can glean valuable information about the regime’s capacity in that locale. However, personal experience is less likely to provide information on the regime’s capabilities the farther away the military and bureaucracy are from the home community. So, while personal experience provides regime capabilities information, it is limited in scope as it is largely bound to the prospective rebel’s home community. Moreover, personal experience provides significant local regime capabilities information but little aggregate regime capabilities information to prospective rebels.

INTERPERSONAL DISCUSSION

Interpersonal discussion is defined as a conversation between at least two people and where information is shared. As an individual is most likely to converse with his or her social group than with a stranger, interpersonal discussion primarily occurs between family members, friends, and with people in a common social organization. That said, a stranger can purposefully seek out a conversation with a specific individual if he or she has an incentive.

During interpersonal discussion, participants exchange information known about a certain phenomenon. Interpersonal discussion relegates information in two ways. First, interpersonal discussion allows individuals to pass along personal experience information. No new information is passed when this type of information transfer occurs between individuals that
possess the same level of information. On the surface, interpersonal discussion in this context seems irrelevant. However, it offers an informational reaffirmation for the discussants; what they independently experience is mutually held between discussants. Second, interpersonal discussion allows a discussant to relay information he or she received through mass media to another discussant that did not receive the media message. This type of interpersonal discussion information transfer allows for discussants to receive information they did not possess previously.

Interpersonal discussion is potentially informative source of information on the regime’s local and aggregate capabilities for a prospective rebel. Here, the level of information the interpersonal discussion medium possesses depends on the discussants’ levels of information. If the discussants possess only personal experience information, interpersonal discussion is largely confirming the local personal experiences already held by the discussants. If one of the discussants possess mass media information and the other(s) does not, the relay of this information proves very informative. The under-informed discussant would then possess both local and aggregate regime capabilities information. Interpersonal discussion can be either ineffectual or very informative depending on the discussants’ levels of information.

MASS MEDIA

Lippmann (1922) suggests that mass media is a window for people “see” beyond their daily lives and gain knowledge about the world that they could not know otherwise. In practice, mass media is typically defined as the modes such as television, newspaper, radio, news magazines, and technology devices used to convey messages. In short, mass media is a tool for a relatively large audience to glean information about the world beyond their home communities.
Mass media is a significant source of regime capabilities information for a prospective rebel. Mass media provides information on the regime’s capabilities beyond what a prospective rebel can locally acquire in his or her home community. For example, mass media can provide through news reports information on troop movements, troop professionalization, possession of armored mechanization, air and sea capabilities, and the use of special tactical units. In addition to direct military information, mass media exposes can include military and state police funding, budgetary changes, and victories or defeats in intra- or inter-state conflicts. Moreover, when compared to personal experience and interpersonal discussion, mass media can provide potentially unparalleled information on the regime’s military capabilities to the a prospective rebel.

From a bureaucratic effectiveness standpoint, mass media reports provide prospective rebels with information on the regime’s capacity to find dissidents as well as it’s willingness to use violence. These media reports could show and/or discuss a regime’s omnipresent police force, court trials of captured dissidents, public displays of repression, and outright torture. Mass media can be used to broadcast parades and civilian protests to either champion or demonize the regime and its policies. This type of mass media message might convey the level of civilian support for the regime on a state-wide level to the prospective rebel. In sum, mass media likely serves as a significant information resource on the regime’s aggregate capabilities for prospective rebels.

Overall, each of the three information sources provide prospective rebels with information on the regime’s capabilities. The difference between the information sources is the level of information that each respectively offers to prospective rebels. Personal experience is likely to only offer local information on the regime’s capabilities. As most conversations occur
between people of the same social group, interpersonal discussion offers little additional information on the regime’s capabilities than what the discussant prospective rebel already maintains from his or her personal experiences. That said, conversations with individuals that have received mass media messages are informative for the discussant prospective rebel that has not received similar media messages. These conversations are particularly rewarding as mass media is likely the most informative information source on the regime’s aggregate capabilities. Prospective rebels that receive mass media messages, either directly or through conversations, likely glean information on the regime’s aggregate military strength and bureaucratic effectiveness. Without mass media information, the prospective rebel probably only possesses local, limited information on the regime’s capabilities. Consequently, I contend prospective rebels are largely dependent on mass media for aggregate regime capabilities information.

While prospective rebels gather regime capabilities information from one or some combination of these sources, the sources’ different levels of information likely influence the perceptions formed. The next section discusses a prominent information-to-perception crystallization process which is Bruner and Goodman’s (1946) and Bruner and Postman’s (1947) three-stage cognitive perceptual process model. After discussing the model, I consider how information from mass media versus personal experience and interpersonal discussion likely affect a prospective rebel’s regime capabilities perception.

**INFORMATION AND PROSPECTIVE REBEL PERCEPTION FORMATION**

What is perception? A working definition is as simple as an individual’s incomplete understanding of some phenomenon. But, how do individuals come to form perceptions on a new phenomenon; they gather information on it. Consider this, every phenomenon has some
defined universe of information on it that, to one degree or another, is available to individuals to consume. I term this universe the information sphere.

For example, imagine an elementary or primary school student is assigned to write a report on some concept that is entirely new to him or her. What does the student probably do? Depending on the question and source availability, the student likely searches one or all of the following information sources to gain a better understanding of the assigned concept: newspapers, magazines, books, television programs, discusses with friends and/or family members, and searches the internet. In short, an individual can form some perception of a phenomenon by accessing the phenomenon information sphere and gathering information on it.

PERCEPTUAL PROCESS MODEL

Bruner and Goodman (1946) and Bruner and Postman (1947) theorize on the mechanics of perception formation and present a three-stage cognitive perceptual process model which codifies this activity. In the first stage, when an individual is introduced to a new concept, actor, or object, often times the new phenomenon strikes his or her interest and wants to know more about it. In the second stage, the desire to gain a better understanding of the phenomenon compels the individual to seek more information on it. After gathering more information on the phenomenon, a perception of the phenomenon crystallizes in the individual’s mind.

The three-stage perceptual process occurs during any new perception formation. For example, the process is the same for a sports fans considering a team’s new player as it is for prospective rebels considering rebellion; each individual undergoes a perception formation process through information gathering. Applying the perceptual process to the prospective rebel, the first stage’s introduction of a new phenomenon is analogous to the noncombatant considering the regime’s capacity to combat a rebellion. As discussed earlier in the chapter, the rebellion
decision is a significant life choice for a prospective rebel given the potential costs associated with rebel group participation. Similar to the second stage, the search for more information on the regime’s capabilities is part of the prospective rebel’s decision. In order to understand the regime’s capabilities, a prospective rebel will gather as much information from all three sources. Finally, like the third stage, a prospective rebel’s regime capabilities perception crystallizes based on the information search. Here, the totality of the information gathered by the prospective rebel coalesces into a perception of the regime’s capacity to combat a rebellion.

THREE CONCERNS

Given the three-stage perceptual process model’s conclusions, the more information a prospective rebel consumes, the more accurate his or her regime capabilities perception is to the regime’s actual capabilities. While a reasonable conclusion, I find three problems exist with this conclusion. First, is it fair to assume that mass media is equally accessible for all prospective rebels, across all states, over time? Just because mass media is potentially the most informative of the information sources on regime capabilities, media effect on perception only occurs if prospective rebels actually receive the media messages. The level of media accessibility in a state must be accounted for when considering the effect of mass media on prospective rebels’ perceptions.

Second, mass media message content is not uniform; media messages can have different cues. Every mass media institution is subject to the sovereign laws of the state with which it is located. Therefore, the level of state control over the mass media institution likely influences the nature of media messages available to prospective rebels. By shaping the messages available, regimes can likely structurally affect the regime capabilities perceptions crystallized by
prospective rebels. As a result, the level of media freedom in a state must be accounted for when considering the effect of mass media on a prospective rebel’s regime capabilities perception.

Third, Bruner and Goodman’s and Bruner and Postman’s three-stage perceptual process model offers an simplistic media effect construct. Assuming media messages are received, theories on media effect differ from the three-stage perceptual process model’s conclusions. In short, mass media does not have the hypodermic needle effect on perceptions and opinions as assumed in the three-stage perceptual process model. Consequently, it is important to account for media effect theory when examining how mass media likely shapes a prospective rebel’s regime capabilities perception.

The effect the level of media freedom has on civil conflict onset has generally, albeit in an under-theorized way, been addressed in the existing civil conflict literature. However, the relationship between the level of media freedom and the level of media access and a prospective rebel’s rebellion decision calculus has gone largely unexamined. Similarly, media effect theory has been considered in a wide range of situations, yet, its potential role in shaping the way in which an individual perceives the regime’s capabilities remains unexplored. The following sections discuss how the level of media freedom, the level of media access, and mass media effect each influence a prospective rebel’s regime capabilities perception.

THE LEVEL OF MEDIA FREEDOM: HOMOGENOUS AND HETEROGENEOUS ENVIRONMENTS

Unfortunately for prospective rebels, personal experience and interpersonal discussion are unlikely to furnish aggregate regime capabilities information. This forms an information dependence on mass media whereas in most cases this is the only information source which provides information on the regime’s aggregate capabilities. When considering mass media
solely in its theoretical form, this dependence is not necessarily problematic as it reports
information like the other two information sources. In the previous section’s mass media
discussion, I assumed mass media messages provide accurate information on the regime’s
aggregate capabilities. In essence, what a prospective rebel reads in a newspaper, sees on
television, or hears on a radio broadcast is indicative of the regime’s actual capacity to combat a
rebellion. However, because mass media interacts with and functions within other actors, it
often operates differently than the neutral, unbiased theoretical form. This can have an effect on
mass media’s message accuracy.

At the state level, the mass media institution is subject to the regime’s sovereign laws.
Given the confluence of the prospective rebel’s likely inability to garner aggregate regime
capabilities information from the non-mass media sources and the regime’s ability to sovereignly
govern its own state, regimes are incentivized to influence the mass media institution. As such, a
regime can see mass media as a way to control what the population knows about its military
strength and bureaucratic effectiveness. By requiring mass media to report that the regime has
“strong” capabilities, it can potentially dissuade challenges to its power. I explore this concept
further in the following pages.

LEVEL OF MEDIA FREEDOM AND MESSAGE MIX

The level of media freedom that a regime allocates to the mass media institution
structures the nature of the information available to the population. The mass media institution’s
level of media freedom is demonstrated on two dimensions which are the definition of
newsworthiness and the determination of media content. In practice, the mass media
institution’s ability to define what is newsworthy and what content to report demonstrates its
level of media freedom. The effects of an increased or decreased level of media freedom isorne on the media environment, or, the mix of pro-regime and non-regime media messages.

The regime likely forces a definition of what constitutes news and censoring the reported
content when it affords only a low level of media freedom to the mass media institution. In this
media environment, mass media does not perform investigative journalism or release exposes on
the regime’s capabilities. Because the regime tightly governs the mass media institution and has
an incentive to dissuade potential challenges, the regime has an interest in allowing media to
release reports that champions its capabilities. As such, mass media is akin to a regime
propaganda tool where it is only allowed to report pro-regime biased messages that the military
is strong and the bureaucracy is effective at finding dissenters. Consequently, when the mass
media institution has a low level of media freedom, the media environment’s message mix is
likely homogenous with a significant pro-regime weight.

Conversely, when the regime does not constrain the mass media institution, mass media
is able to independently define what constitutes news and determine content coverage. As a
result, mass media likely takes on the watchdog role as it is relatively free from regime oversight.
Acting as the population’s sentinel against regime corruption and malfeasance, mass media
investigates the regime and reports on its activities and policies to the public. From a message
mix standpoint, while the regime can release its pro-regime message, it is only one of the many
media messages present in the media environment. When the mass media institution has a high
level of media freedom, the media environment’s message mix is likely heterogeneous with a
non-regime message weight.

The Chilean media example represents a real world instance of a mass media institution
gaining more media freedom from the regime. The practical implication was that the media
environment changed from a perfectly pro-regime homogenous message mix to a heterogeneous one in 1985. In sum, the Pinochet regime only allowed mass media to report pro-regime message pre-1985, however, the pro-regime and a non-regime message made up the media environment from 1985 onward. If we accept the three stage perceptual process, the Chilean people’s Pinochet regime perceptions perhaps changed from that of absolute strength to potential weakness assuming they received the non-regime media messages.

The Pinochet example demonstrates the transition from a perfectly homogenous media environment to largely homogenous media environment. That said, most mass media institutions do not possess such low levels of media freedom. In practical terms, media environment message mixes range from pro-regime message exclusivity (perfect homogeneity) to an infinite number of messages on regime’s capabilities (perfect heterogeneity), worldwide. Figure 3.1 illustrates how the media environment’s message mix changes as the level of media freedom changes.

Figure 3.1 represents an increase in the level of media freedom and an equal increase in media environment’s message mix when moving left to right along the diagonal line. The nexus of the dotted vertical line and the diagonal line illustrates the point in which the pro-regime and anti-regime messages achieve symmetry in the media environment. Functionally, this is the point at which the pro-regime message no longer has message prevalence over the anti-regime message in the media environment. At the aggregate level, the vertical dotted line represents the break between two holistic media environments: media-as-propaganda and the watchdog media.

Starting at the far left of Figure 3.1, mass media likely takes on the propaganda role. Given the low level of media freedom, the media environment is dominated by pro-regime messages. By moving right, while still outnumbered, a growing few mass media report non-
regime messages to the public. This media environment message mix is termed minorly-heterogeneous. Upon passing the dotted line, the pro-regime message declines to the point that it no longer dominates the media environment. As mass media increasingly enjoys the freedom from regime oversight, the media environment is increasingly filled with investigative journalism reports on the regime’s policies and capabilities.

When considering media message consumption, admittedly, it is nearly impossible to know the type of and how many mass media messages each individual prospective rebel consumes. However, as the level of media freedom structures the media environment’s message mix, that same message mix offers clues on what information a prospective rebel is likely to receive on the regime’s aggregate capabilities. So, on one hand, a prospective rebel is likely to receive largely accurate information about the regime’s aggregate capabilities when he or she resides in a mass media institution with a high level of media freedom. On the other hand, a
prospective rebel is likely to receive pro-regime biased information about the regime’s aggregate capabilities when he or she resides in a mass media institution with a low level of media freedom. I argue that, based on the level of media freedom, I can predict what messages prospective rebels likely receive and, as to be discussed later in the chapter, what perceptions they are likely to crystallize on the regime’s capabilities..

To summarize, due to the mass media institution’s level of media freedom, mass media does not always report on regime capabilities in the same fashion. While mass media likely informs prospective rebels on the regime’s aggregate capabilities, the content of the message may not always accurately depict the regime’s actual aggregate capabilities. The next section explores how media messages influence a prospective rebel’s regime capabilities perception.

MEDIA EFFECT AND PERCEPTION

For a prospective rebel, mass media offers a potentially unparalleled source of information on the regime’s aggregate capabilities. However, prospective rebels receiving media message in a heterogeneous versus a homogenous media environment are likely to be presented with very different regime capabilities information. On the surface, the likely effect of media message variance has on a prospective rebel’s regime capabilities perception seems reasonable. Bruner and Goodman’s (1946) and Bruner and Postman’s (1947) perceptual process model suggests that all gathered information will shape what perception crystallizes for an individual on a phenomenon. But, this assumption runs dangerously close to one of the existing literature’s theoretical problems, the hypodermic needle media effect. The hypodermic needle media effect argues that an individual’s perceptions and opinions are continuously updated after receiving each and every media message. For example, an individual’s opinions would swing wildly on
the phenomenon receiving contradictory media messages. Refuted by Lazarfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet (1944), perceptions and opinions are more stable and do not form or change through a shot-styled media effect.

So, while the perceptual process model's first two stages (interest and information gathering) appear logical, media message reception does not automatically translate to perception formation. Rather, a more nuanced media effect process occurs in the third stage of the perceptual process. This section discards the hypodermic needle media effect assumed in the perceptual process model and considers two political communication media effect models which are Zaller’s (1992) Receive-Accept-Sample (RAS) model and Zaller’s (1996) crossover media effect model. By specifically accounting for media effect in the perception crystallization process, I offer a stronger, more theoretically informed model on the manner in which prospective rebels form regime capabilities perceptions.

THE RAS MODEL, MEDIA EFFECT, AND THE PROSPECTIVE REBEL

To this point in the dissertation, I have argued that information available to a prospective rebel likely affects a prospective rebel’s regime capability perception. However, the three-stage perceptual process offers a too-simplistic explanation of media's effect on perception. This section sets aside the hypodermic needle media effect and looks to the political communication sub-field for theoretical mechanisms on the way in which mass media messages influence opinions. Of course, several media effect theories exist yet two prominent media effect models map particularly well with the three-stage perceptual process model. These two media effect models are Zaller's (1992) RAS model and Zaller's (1996) crossover media effect.

Like Bruner and Goodman’s and Bruner and Postman’s three-stage perceptual process model, Zaller’s (1992) influential Receive-Accept-Sample (RAS) model incorporates the
fundamentals of phenomenon interest, information consumption, and potential perception change. While Zaller originally developed the RAS model to describe how American political perceptions form, I contend that the principles of the RAS model can be applied to the process with which prospective rebels crystallize their regime capabilities perceptions. By focusing on media message reception and its effect on perception, the RAS model allows scholars to examine the nuanced details that exist in and between the three stage perceptual process model's second and third stages.

The RAS model consists of three stages. In the first stage, Reception, a prospective rebel actively seeks and is passively bombarded by regime capabilities media messages. Zaller contends that the amount of information an individual receives is based upon his or her level of cognitive engagement which is defined as an individual's level of interest in a particular phenomenon. Here, the cognitive engagement factor suggests that as individual’s level of interest increases, the more likely he or she will receive media messages on the phenomenon. I argue it is fair to assume that prospective rebels have a relatively high level of cognitive engagement on the regime's capabilities level because the rebellion decision presents a significant life choice. In short, the prospective rebel has an incentive to make the strategically correct rebellion decision and the gathering of information, specifically mass media information, on the regime’s capabilities is a rational approach to do so.

In the second stage, Acceptance, the RAS model finds that individuals tend to resist media messages counter to their pre-existing positions on an issue. Zaller finds that an individual’s ability to resist the media message’s cue depends on his or her ability to identify the relationship between their predisposition and the media message. The resistance factor is a significant hurdle in Zaller's RAS model as most Americans have some political predisposition.
The theoretical need to account for political predisposition is clearly important. However, I contend the prospective rebel presents a somewhat special case for the Acceptance stage as he or she inherently possesses a neutral pre-existing regime capabilities perception.

On one hand, the prospective rebel is not pro-regime as he or she is considering rebellion. Naturally, this is not a pro-regime disposition. On the other hand, the prospective rebel is not wholly anti-regime as he or she has not yet joined a rebel group. By employing personal experience and limited information derived from interpersonal discussion, a prospective rebel is likely to understand that the regime has soldiers, weapons, and can locate rebels to some degree. However, when employing this localized information, the regime’s aggregate capabilities probably remain unknown to the prospective rebel. As a result, the prospective rebel likely has a low resistance factor to media messages due to the combination of neutral political predispositions and probably limited information on the regime’s aggregate capabilities. Moreover, a prospective rebel is likely to accept media message cues because he or she has a neutral predisposition and limited capabilities information to qualify them against.

In the final stage, Sampling, the RAS model concludes that the media effect on an individual’s opinion is demonstrated through “top-of-head” information recall. Zaller finds that asking the individual pre-message and post-message questions, a change in what the individual recalls about the phenomenon illustrates the media effect on his or her opinion. For the prospective rebel, I suggest that the individual is at the cusp of a decision when considering rebellion. The media effect on a prospective rebel’s regime capabilities perception is thus demonstrated through the rebellion decision calculus and subsequent rebellion or noncombatant behavior.
In sum, a prospective rebel’s regime capabilities perception is influenced by mass media messages. Due to a prospective rebel’s incentive to make a rational, strategic rebellion decision and the likely dependence on mass media for aggregate regime capabilities information, media messages should have a significant effect on his or her regime capabilities perception. Given that perception serves as the basis for a prospective rebel’s rebellion decision calculus, the determined rebel or noncombatant behavior is, at least partially, the culmination of the media effect.

THE CROSSOVER EFFECT AND ASYMMETRICALLY-WEIGHTED MEDIA ENVIRONMENTS

When considering cross-national media system analysis, media environments from heterogeneous to homogeneous message mixes are present throughout the world. Message “loudness”, defined as the message’s prevalence in the media environment, is a problematic factor for the RAS model as it assumes that two messages exist with symmetrical media environment prevalence. Said a different way, Zaller assumes that individuals have an equal probability of receiving each media message. Zaller fashions the competing message RAS model in this way as his research examines how an individual’s level of cognitive engagement and predisposition resistance factors mediate media effect in the United States’s media environment. By assuming equal media message “loudness”, Zaller is able to analyze the effect these factors have upon opinion change. Unfortunately, due to this assumption, the RAS model is unable to gauge how media influences perceptions in a media environment with an asymmetrical message mix.

Zaller (1996) acknowledges that the RAS model is not a silver bullet media effect model and argues that opinions are affected differently when varying message loudness. Here, Zaller finds that media message mix is likely to have a structural effect on opinion crystallization.
Termed the crossover effect, Zaller contends that media message loudness influences opinions because an individual has a higher probability of receiving a message when it is asymmetrically prevalent in the media environment. Even those individuals with pre-existing positions counter to the media message's cue can experience some level of opinion change due to the loudness of the messages. In sum, an asymmetrically loud media message complicates both the resistance factor and the "top-of-head" recall process by repetitively bombarding the individual and effectively drowning out the lesser prevalent message's cue. An example may help illustrate this crossover effect on perception.

First, imagine some phenomenon has occurred, mass media has decided it is newsworthy, and media coverage ensues. For ease of explanation purposes, next imagine a population of media messages on the phenomenon is ten. Within this media message population, two messages exist: Message A and Message B. Also, assume that an individual possesses a high level of cognitive engagement on the phenomenon and thereby receives all ten media messages. Finally, imagine the media environment's message mix is asymmetrically weighted; Message A is significantly "louder" than Message B. Message A’s cue is represented in nine of the ten media messages and Message B’s cue is only in the remaining on media message.

Using the “top-of-head” sampling media effect method, a significantly higher probability exists that the individual will recall cues from Message A than Message B on the phenomenon. Even if the individual possesses predispositions more akin to Message B’s cue, he or she becomes less likely to identify the links between these predispositions and the phenomenon in the face of the Message A’s asymmetrical prevalence and reception. The increase in Message A’s recall probability illustrates the crossover effect’s opinion or perception influence.
Moreover, media message “loudness” demonstrates a media effect on opinion by shaping what an individual recalls about the phenomenon.

THE Crossover EFFECT’S LIKELY IMPACT ON THE PROSPECTIVE REBEL’S REGime Capabilities Perception

Applying the crossover effect to the prospective rebel, an asymmetrically loud media message likely influences the way media shapes his or her regime capabilities perception. Inserting a prospective rebel into the hypothetical media message example, the prospective rebel will only experience a symmetrical-mixed media environment once (when Message A and Message B are each reported in five media outlets) out of a possible ten media environments. As a result, the RAS model does not accurately depict media environments prospective rebels likely receive media messages in. More likely, prospective rebels experience some type of asymmetrically-weighted media environment where either Message A or Message B has a "louder" presence than the other message.

Refer back to Figure 3.1. It illustrates all the possible media environments on regime capabilities by showing the change in the level of media freedom and the impact on message mix. Here, the vertical dotted line represents the only media environment with message mix symmetry between the pro-regime (left side) and non-regime (right side) poles. Collectively, the areas to the left and right of the vertical dotted line are media environments where one of the messages possesses message mix prevalence. By moving closer to the poles, the asymmetrical-weight of the one message increases.

When introducing the message loudness media effect into Figure 3.1, a prospective rebel who resides in the watchdog versus the media-as-propaganda media environment is likely to receive messages demonstrative of the message mix. Given their high level of cognitive engagement, dependence on mass media for aggregate capabilities information, and low political
predispositions, a prospective rebel likely will receive both types of media messages. However, because the prospective rebel likely receives more of one message than the other, he or she has a higher probability of accepting and recalling the louder message cues. According to crossover effect conclusions, the prospective rebel likely adopts these cues as his or her regime capabilities perception.

When considering the concepts of media freedom level and the crossover effect together, a prospective rebel is likely to receive, accept, and recall media message cues from whichever asymmetrically-loud media environment he or she resides. On one hand, if a prospective rebel resides in a watchdog media environment, he or she is likely to receive more non-regime than pro-regime media messages. Due to high cognitive engagement and low predisposition resistance factors, the prospective rebel will receive both non-regime and pro-regime messages. However, the pro-regime message will likely be drowned out given the asymmetrical prevalence of the non-regime message in the watchdog media environment. The prospective rebel is likely to recall the non-regime message cues which include accurate regime capabilities information. As a result, the prospective rebel’s regime capabilities perception is influenced by the non-regime message cue; the perception will likely accurately depict the regime’s actual aggregate capabilities.

On the other hand, if a prospective rebel resides in a media-as-propaganda media environment, he or she is likely to receive more pro-regime than non-regime media messages. Again, the prospective rebel is likely to receive both pro-regime and non-regime messages due to a high cognitive engagement level and a low predisposition resistance factor. However, the non-regime cue will likely be drowned out given the pro-regime message’s loudness in the media-as-propaganda media environment. Here, the prospective rebel has a higher probability to
recall the pro-regime message cues which likely aggrandize the regime’s actual aggregate capabilities. In sum, the prospective rebel’s regime capabilities perception is affected by the pro-regime message cue and will likely reflect the biased, pro-regime accounting of the regime’s aggregate capabilities.

To review, this section examines how mass media messages shape perceptions. Moving beyond the perceptual processes’ tacitly assumed hypodermic needle media effect, I look to the political communication literature for theory on the specific ways in which mass media is able to influence perceptions. Using Zaller’s RAS model and the crossover effect, I present how media affects opinions in an asymmetrical media environment. According to Zaller, the louder media message drowns out the less prevalent one in an asymmetrical media environment which results in individuals being more likely to recall information from the louder cue. This louder cue recall represents the media message’s impact on perception of the phenomenon of interest. When applying this media effect process to the prospective rebel, the asymmetrical media environment affects the regime capabilities perception. As pro-regime messages are asymmetrically loud in the media-as-propaganda media environment and non-regime messages are asymmetrically loud in the watchdog media environment, the level of media freedom structurally shapes how a prospective rebel perceives the regime’s capabilities.

To this point, I have analyzed how media message content affects a prospective rebel’s regime capabilities perception. However, a prospective rebel's regime capabilities perception can only be influenced by mass media messages if he or she actually receives the message. The next section discusses how a prospective rebel's regime capabilities perception likely varies as the level of media access changes.
THE LEVEL OF MEDIA ACCESS: MEDIA MESSAGE RECEPTION AND LIMITED INFORMATION PERCEPTIONS

While the mass media institution's media freedom level likely influences the type of media messages available to a prospective rebel, a different structural dynamic impacts a prospective rebel’s search for regime capabilities information. I argue that a country’s level of media access likely affects a prospective rebel's perceptions as it varies the probability that he or she will receive media messages. Prospective rebels likely desire the most information possible on the regime’s capabilities in order to determine the "correct" rebellion decision. However, desire and ability are not necessarily the same.

An underlying assumption in media freedom's explanation of the likelihood of civil conflict is that prospective rebels receive media messages when they are reported. I contend it is inappropriate to assume that every prospective can receive media messages, let alone all media messages, just because they are being written or broadcast. Rather, the level of media access must be accounted for as it has a fundamental effect on the ability of prospective rebels to receive mass media information. This section explores how media access likely shapes a prospective rebel's regime capabilities perception.

DOMESTIC CLASS AND THE DIFFERENCE IN MEDIA ACCESS

The media access thesis argues that the level of media access in a state determines a prospective rebel’s ability to, either passively or actively, receive media messages. As mass media messages provide information on a regime’s aggregate capabilities, the level of mass media access can influence a prospective rebel’s perception. While all prospective rebels seek regime capabilities information, they are not equally able to acquire it from mass media. Prospective rebels come from all segments of society (Grossman 1995; Popkin 1979; Skocpol 1979; Fearon 2004a; Salehyan and Gleditsch 2006; Huntington 1996) and their abilities to
consume mass media vary substantially. Personal wealth and income affect an individual’s ability to access media and thereby receive media messages.

It is easy to imagine that an American has significantly greater access to mass media than a Namibian or a Javan when considering the level of mass media access cross-nationally. I take this conclusion one step further to the domestic level. I argue an aggregate decrease in the media access level likely does not uniformly affect the entire population's ability to receive media messages. More likely, an individual's income influences his or her ability to access media. Norris (2004) makes a similar argument by suggesting that income level likely affects whether or not an individual has the capital expenditure necessary to purchase luxury goods such as television set, cable or satellite feed, a radio set, and even a newspaper. The lower the income, the less likely the individual is to make these luxury goods purchases. So, even as media access aggregately declines, this decrease should not uniformly affect the entire population’s ability to receive media messages. If income affects media accessibility, then certain segments of a domestic population should maintain media access despite a reduction in the country’s aggregate level of media access. I contend that the ability to receive media messages is not only different between states but also domestically by income level. In short, I account for the domestic variance in media access by considering a population in terms of class, specifically Elite and Non-Elite.

ELITE AND NON-ELITE PROSPECTIVE REBELS

First and foremost, it is important to define these actors, their particular preferences, and their particular rebellion calculus. Beginning with a definition, the Elite and Non-Elite actors are defined by their level of income and personal wealth. Here, wealthy and prosperous individuals are considered Elite prospective rebels and all other non-wealthy individuals are deemed Non-
Elite. While level of income differentiates the Elite prospective rebel from the Non-Elite prospective rebel, I assume that the two groups share the same preference which is to maximize personal welfare. This assumption is rather simplistic; it is similar to the rational actor assumptions made in the opportunity literature (e.g. Grossman 1995). Using the welfare maximization preference, I assume that the Elite and Non-Elite will both choose to rebel when they perceive the regime is weak. Rebellion is attractive for a few different reasons. For the Elite prospective rebel, it offers the opportunity supplant the incumbent regime and establish a new institution that maximizes his or her welfare. For the Non-Elite, rebellion is attractive because often time it offers a better life than remaining a noncombatant. Like the Elite prospective rebel, a Non-Elite prospective rebel will likely maximize his or her welfare by being part of a successful rebellion; as the maxim suggests, to the winner goes the spoils. However, it is important to remember that rebellion is likely a dangerous decision. The strength of the regime’s capabilities matters; while a weak regime may be defeated, a strong regime will likely defeat a rebel group. But, as the prospective rebels do not possess perfect or complete information on the regime’s capacity to combat a rebellion, the amount and accuracy of an Elite and a Non-Elite prospective rebel’s regime capabilities information underscores their rebellion decision. In short, rebellion may offer a way for prospective rebels to maximize welfare and it may offer the exact opposite, depending on the regime’s actual aggregate capabilities to fight a rebellion.

Considering these Elite and Non-Elite prospective rebel distinctions, how might income affect the likelihood of civil conflict? A state’s socio-economic elite have the income and personal wealth necessary to afford luxury purchases like televisions, radios, and newspapers. So, even when a state’s overall level of media access declines, the Elite class is still likely able to
receive and consume media messages. On the other hand, the Non-Elite class is unlikely to possess the level of income and wealth necessary to purchase luxury goods like media receptors. As a result, the Non-Elite class is more likely to experience the decline in media access as the state's level of media access declines. Consequently, Non-Elite prospective rebels are less likely to receive informative media messages on the regime's capabilities which should affect the accuracy of their regime capabilities perceptions.

The level of media access likely has a significant implication on a prospective rebel's regime capabilities perception. The higher the level of media access, the more likely a prospective rebel utilizes mass media to gather information on the regime's capabilities. As mass media messages probably include aggregate capabilities information, a prospective rebel that receives mass media messages is likely to form more accurate regime capabilities perceptions than those that do not. As the level of media access declines, a prospective rebel is less likely to use mass media to gather regime capabilities information and thus more likely to crystallize a regime capabilities perception from personal experience and interpersonal discussion which offer largely local, limited information. A prospective rebel in this circumstance is less likely to form an accurate regime capabilities perception.

Bringing these various concepts together, Figure 3.2 illustrates the relationship between the level of media access, the level of regime capabilities information, and domestic population class. First, similar to Norris (2004), media access is categorized into two levels which are “Widespread” Access and “Limited” Access. In a “widespread” access state, mass media can be received by all segments of society and serves as an important population-wide information source. In a “limited” access state, only the Elite class has access to mass media what the level
of media access is aggregately low. Second, the level of information is divided into two categories which are “Local” and “Aggregate”. “Local” represents the information likely gathered through the personal experience and interpersonal discussion and “Aggregate” demonstrates the information likely received through mass media. Third, the domestic population is separated into two classes, the Elite and Non-Elite. The Elite class possesses significant income and personal wealth. The Non-Elite class represents the remainder of the society.

Information on a regime’s local capabilities is available to all prospective rebels, regardless of class. Information gathering through personal experience is a natural, near-involuntary process for all individuals. Additionally, a prospective rebel is likely to inquire with his or her peer group about the regime’s capabilities given the high interest in the subject. While both of these information sources are widely available, they are unlikely to yield information about the regime’s capabilities beyond the prospective rebel’s local area. In a “widespread”
access state, both the Elite and Non-Elite have a high level of media access, likely possess aggregate regime capabilities information, and crystallize accurate regime capabilities perceptions. However, I contend a difference in information probably exists between the Elite and Non-Elite classes in a “limited” access state. Regardless of a decrease in aggregate media access, the Elite class likely retains the ability to receive media messages and thus remains informed on the regime’s aggregate capabilities. Unlike the Elite class, the Non-Elite class experiences the decline in mass media access. Consequently, the Non-Elite prospective rebel is likely to form inaccurate regime capabilities perceptions by relying on local, limited information as mass media becomes less accessible.

LIMITED INFORMATION PERCEPTIONS AND SUB-OPTIMAL REBELLION DECISIONS

Recall that a prospective rebel's regime capabilities perception likely influences his or her rebellion decision calculus. A prospective rebel likely crystallizes a regime capabilities perception from local information when media is inaccessible. However, this local information-oriented perception can have negative consequences for the prospective rebel. A prospective rebel is more likely to calculate a sub-optimal rebellion strategy when his or her regime capabilities perception is formed from local versus aggregate capabilities information. Fearon (1995) and Huth (1988; 1997) argue that incomplete or limited information can lead to sub-optimal decisions and ultimately behavior for rational actors. Considering a rational actor’s decision calculus on combat, Fearon and Huth each conclude that at least two limited information-induced sub-optimal decisions exist which are “yielding too little” and “yielding too much”. While these findings center on inter-state conflict, I find that the limited information problem is equally applicable for a prospective rebel’s rebellion decision calculus.
First, when a prospective rebel maintains only limited information, it is highly likely that he or she is unable to distinguish between regimes that are both locally and aggregately weak in capabilities from regimes that are locally weak but maintain strong aggregate capabilities. The "yield too little" sub-optimal decision scenario begins when a prospective rebel possesses only local information and the regime has a weak capacity in that area. Using this local information, the prospective rebel likely crystallizes that the regime is weak and calculates to rebel. However, while the regime is weak in the prospective rebel's area, the regime's actual aggregate capabilities are strong. As a result, the prospective rebel makes a rebellion decision against his or her preference of fighting a weak regime. Moreover, from an information standpoint, had the prospective rebel possessed more informative aggregate regime capabilities information, he or she would have likely determined to remain a noncombatant and not rebel.

Second, opposite from above, when a prospective rebel has only limited information, it is highly likely that he or she is unable to distinguish between regimes that are both locally and aggregately strong in capabilities from regimes that are locally strong but have weak aggregate capabilities. The "yield too much" scenario begins when a prospective rebel possesses only local information and he or she hears and sees that the regime is strong in their area. Crystallizing a perception from this local information, the prospective rebel likely calculates to remain a noncombatant. Yet, despite the regime's strong capabilities near and around the prospective rebel, the regime's actual aggregate capabilities are weak. As a result, by calculating to remain a noncombatant, the prospective rebel behaves counter to his or her preference of rebelling against a weak regime. From an information standpoint, the prospective rebel would have likely calculated to rebel had he or she possessed more informative aggregate capabilities information.
Recall that the Non-Elite prospective rebel is more likely to experience any decline in the state's level of media access than an Elite prospective rebel. The practical implication is that the Non-Elite prospective rebel is less likely to receive the informative aggregate capabilities information that is likely included in mass media messages. Consequently, as the Elites likely receive these media messages, a domestic divergence in the accuracy of the regime capabilities perceptions exists between the Non-Elite and Elite prospective rebels. Applying this to the likelihood of calculating sub-optimal rebellion decisions, I contend that the Non-Elite prospective rebel is more likely to commit miscalculate their preferred rebellion strategy than the Elite prospective rebel because the Non-Elite prospective rebel has an elevated probability of crystallizing a less-than-accurate regime capabilities perception. In sum, because a Non-Elite prospective rebel is more prone to experience any decrease in media access, he or she has an increased probability of forming inaccurate opinions and thus calculating rebellion behaviors counter to preferred strategies.

To review, the level of media access in a state matters for media message influence; whereas the media message must first be received by a prospective rebel for it to shape his or her regime capabilities perception. The level of media access likely varies both across countries and within domestic populations. Countries with a significant level of media access are likely to have an informed population regardless of class. However, when the level of media accesses decreases, the Elite and Non-Elite domestic classes likely possess different levels of media access. I argue the Elite probably retain a high level of media access regardless of an aggregate decrease. It is the Non-Elite class that has a higher chance of experiencing the media access decline. When this occurs, the Non-Elite class’s regime capabilities perceptions likely crystallize from local, limited information. As a result, this class’s rebellion decisions are more susceptible
to sub-optimal calculations. Moreover, the level of media access effects a prospective rebel’s regime capabilities perception and ultimately the rebellion decision calculation.

**SUMMARY**

The prospective rebel’s rebellion decision calculus is not based on perfect or complete information about the regime’s capabilities as assumed by the state capacity literature. On the contrary, the prospective rebel possesses only limited information and the rebellion decision calculus is based on his or her perception of the regime’s capacity to combat a rebel group. Chapter III has examined several factors which shape a prospective rebel’s regime capabilities perception. Before transitioning to my theoretical addition to the civil conflict literature, this section offers a review of the several theories and mechanisms presented to this point.

Beginning with the level of media freedom, while mass media is arguably the most informative source of information on the regime’s aggregate capabilities, media messages can be biased. Given the prospective rebel’s dependence on mass media for aggregate capabilities information and the regime’s ability to sovereignly govern the mass media institution, regimes often constrain mass media in order to maintain power. However, not all mass media institutions are heavily constrained by the incumbent regime. In short, a cross-national variance exists in the level of freedom regimes afford to their respective mass media institution.

I argue that the variance in media freedom impacts the type of media messages that are most likely available for prospective rebels to receive. So, when the level of media freedom is low, the mass media environment is dominated by pro-regime media messages which likely aggrandize the regime’s capabilities to deter potential challengers. The opposite is true in mass media environments with a high level of media freedom. Here, a watchdog media exists and
non-regime investigative media on the regime’s actual aggregate capabilities are the most prevalent in the media environment. As a result, the same prospective rebel would likely conclude a different regime capability perception based on the media messages structurally determined by the level of media freedom.

However, an individual’s perceptions do not swing wildly back and forth on a phenomenon each time he or she receives an opposing media message. So, while the level of media freedom is a fundamental factor determining the media messages likely available for a prospective rebel to consume, a more nuanced process surrounds how mass media affects perception. Using Zaller’s Receive-Accept-Sample (RAS) model, I consider how mass media messages shape a prospective rebel’s regime capabilities perception. Because a prospective rebel likely has a high cognitive engagement level on the regime’s capacity and a low rebellion predisposition, he or she will consume and consider both pro-regime and non-regime media messages. However, the type of media environments prospective rebels likely reside and consume media in is not accurately depicted by Zaller’s symmetrical media message assumption.

The probability that a prospective rebel resides in a media environment with symmetrically-weighted pro-regime and non-regime media messages is quite low. I contend that the asymmetrical media messages assumptions held in Zaller’s (1996) crossover effect better encapsulates the media effect process for prospective rebels. In terms of media effect, Zaller shows that the louder message likely drowns out the weaker one which makes the message consuming individual more likely to recall cues from the louder message. Applying the level of media freedom impact on message mix and the crossover effect conclusions on media effect to the prospective rebel, he or she is likely to form a pro-regime-oriented regime capabilities
perception when in a media-as-propaganda media environment and a non-regime-oriented one when in a watchdog media environment.

While the level of media freedom structurally effects a prospective rebel’s regime capabilities perception, he or she must actually receive the pro-regime or non-regime media messages for any media effect to occur. The level of media access affects the accuracy of the prospective rebel’s regime capabilities perceptions. I hypothesize the level of media access varies across two different levels of analysis. Generally, states can be cross-nationally compared by level of media access. When media access is high, a state is likely to have an informed population. However, when media access aggregately declines, I argue that a domestic class analysis offers rewarding conclusions on perception formation and the likelihood of rebellion.

The Elite and Non-Elite classes possess different abilities to access media. The Elite prospective rebel, due to high income, are likely always able to access mass media regardless of any aggregate decline. However, when media access aggregately declines in a state, it is the Non-Elite class which likely experiences this decrease. I argue that a decrease in media access has an informational effect on a Non-Elite prospective rebel. When mass media is scarce or inaccessible, a Non-Elite prospective rebel likely calculates a regime capabilities perception from the local and limited in scope personal experience and interpersonal discussion information sources. Consequently, a Non-Elite prospective rebel’s rebellion decision is likely more prone to sub-optimal calculations because his or her regime capabilities perception is formed from limited information. In sum, the level of media access effects a prospective rebel’s regime capabilities perception and ultimately the rebellion decision calculation.

Moreover, the level of media freedom and the level of media access influence the type of information and its availability for the prospective rebel. I argue this has a significant effect on a
prospective rebel’s regime capabilities perception and ultimately his or her rebellion behavior. However, while the level of media freedom and the level of media access have been examined for their effects on the likelihood of civil conflict, these analyses have always considered these two concepts independently. Furthermore, the existing literature’s causal mechanisms are often under-theorized; the manner in which mass media effects perception either goes undiscussed or a hypodermic needle-esque process is assumed. The remainder of Chapter III is dedicated to my theoretical addition to the civil conflict literature which offers a solution to these literature gaps. Here, I combine and vary the level of media freedom and level of media access factors, consider the implications each media circumstance has on a prospective rebel’s regime capabilities perception, and theorize on the likelihood of civil conflict.

**MEDIA INTERACTION TERM: MEDIA SYSTEM TYPE AND THE PROSPECTIVE REBEL**

The level of media freedom and the level of media access influences the type of information likely available to a prospective rebel and a prospective rebel’s likely ability to receive mass media messages. By determining the media environment’s message mix and the likelihood of reception, both of these factors shape a prospective rebel’s regime capabilities perception. However, to date, the civil conflict literature has separated these factors and considered their respective effects on the likelihood of civil conflict independent of each other. This is puzzling decision as these factors are neither theoretically mutually exclusive nor does a real world circumstance exist where these dimensions are not omnipresent and relevant. In short, no theoretical reason exists to consider these factors independently when they are always intimately related in the real world.
Norris (2004) comes to a similar conclusion. She finds that the effect media freedom has on perceptions differs depending on the level of media access. This conclusion makes intuitive sense; if mass media is inaccessible, media freedom will have very little influence on perception regardless of message type. Only when considering both the media environment’s message mix and the prospective rebel’s likely ability to receive media messages can the effect media has on a prospective rebel’s perception be determined.

As noted in Chapter II, Norris offers a media system theory which categorizes media systems across the media freedom and media access dimensions. Using variants of “high” and “low” on each dimension, the media system theory produces four media system types. Norris finds that each media system type likely has a different impact upon an individual’s perceptions. As such, this media system theory serves as the foundation for my theoretical arguments as it presents an extremely useful framework to structurally consider how mass media likely influences perceptions when the levels of media freedom and media access vary. By employing Norris’s media system typology, I argue that each of the four different media freedom and media access combinations affect a prospective rebel’s regime capabilities perception. Ultimately, this variance in perception formation likely influences the probability of civil conflict onset.

I break from Norris’s media system theory in one fundamental way which is the assumption that media is consumed equally by a state’s domestic actors. As I argue earlier in the chapter, media access is not uniform across an entire population. When considering a state's population in terms of class, the Elite and Non-Elite classes maintain different capacities to consume media messages. By incorporating domestic media access variance into Norris’s original matrix, Figure 3.3 presents the new model.
The remainder of Chapter III presents a detailed theoretical explanation of Figure 3.3 and the implications for relationship between mass media and the likelihood of civil conflict onset. I specifically address how the four different media system types likely affect regime capabilities perceptions of the two domestic classes and the probable resulting rebellion decision calculations. Because probabilistic theorizing on the covariance of two continuous variables has a complicated explanation, I simplify it by considering media freedom on two levels, “High” and “Low” and separately theorize on each as the level of media access decreases from...
“Widespread” to “Limited”.

In order to compare the likelihood of civil conflict within the media freedom-media access covariance, I create a 2 x 2 matrix that is consistent with my theoretical explanations for each media system type. Here, each matrix is tailored to the level and accuracy of the regime capabilities information available to the Elite and Non-Elite prospective rebels. As the levels of media freedom and media access as well as the regime’s capabilities change, each matrix suggests the likely rebellion behavior (“Rebel” or “Noncombatant”) for the Elite and Non-Elite prospective rebels, respectively.

For explanation and presentation simplicity purposes, I make five important assumptions that are consistent with my theoretical explanations in the 2 x 2 matrices. First, a regime’s capabilities are divided into Local and Aggregate capabilities. I make this distinction as some prospective rebels are unable to gather aggregate capabilities information but can gather local capabilities information. As such, I assume that prospective rebels acquire Regime’s Aggregate Capabilities level information primarily through mass media and Regime’s Local Capabilities level information through personal experience and interpersonal discussion. Second, both Regime’s Aggregate Capabilities and Regime’s Local Capabilities are divided into two levels which are “strong” and “weak”. A “strong” capabilities level suggests the regime has a significant military presence and an effective bureaucratic capacity in that area, be it the overall state or that particular locale. A “weak” capabilities level suggests the opposite. However, given the regime’s control over the mass media institution, Regime’s Aggregate Capabilities “weak” category is replaced with “manufactured strong” when the level of media freedom is “low”. Here, a “manufactured strong” demonstrates the situation when Regime’s Aggregate Capabilities are actually “weak” but mass media is required to report them as “strong”. Third, mass media
information (Regime’s Aggregate Capabilities level) trumps personal experience and interpersonal discussion information (Regime’s Local Capabilities level) as it offers more informative information on the regime’s overall capacity to combat a rebellion. Fourth, when the level of media access in a state is “widespread”, I assume Regime’s Aggregate Capabilities level information is available to the Elite and Non-Elite prospective rebels and will likely shape their perceptions and rebellion calculi. However, when the level of media access in a state is “limited”, only the Elite prospective rebels can receive Regime’s Aggregate Capabilities information. Fifth, the Elite prospective rebels can share their mass media-derived Regime’s Aggregate Capabilities level information with the Non-Elite prospective rebels. As an incentive may compel the Elites to remain silent, I do not assume they are required to share this information. But, if shared, this information will influence the Non-Elite prospective rebels’ likely regime capabilities perceptions and rebellion calculi. Sixth, As previously discussed, the two limited information sources are less likely provide informative and accurate information on the regime's actual aggregate capabilities than mass media. As a result, I argue that Non-Elite prospective rebels are more likely to form misperceptions of the regime's capabilities when they on limited information sources for regime capabilities information. A regime’s capabilities can look strong or look weak to a Non-Elite prospective rebel in this situation when the regime may or may not actually possess that aggregate capabilities level. I use Local Capabilities Level to proxy what a Non-Elite prospective rebel may locally see and hear and thus perceive. While the actual Local Capabilities Level is not directly observable for each and every prospective rebel, the "Strong" and "Weak" Local Capabilities Levels are the two (mis)perceptions that a limited information-reliant Non-Elite prospective rebel could form on the regime's capabilities.

By covarying the information, class, and capabilities, each matrix illustrates a certain
number of scenario(s) where at least one prospective rebel class calculates to “Rebel”. This number ranges from 0 (where all prospective rebels in every scenario are likely to calculate to remain “Noncombatant”) to 4 (where at least one prospective rebel class in each scenario are likely to calculate to “Rebel”). In short, the higher the number of rebellion scenarios in a matrix, the higher the risk that the media system type is likely to experience a civil conflict. By summing the number of scenarios where “Rebel” is determined for each matrix, I determine the expected rebellion risk for each corresponding media system type. I conclude Chapter III by comparing the media system types’ expected rebellion risks and offer three corresponding hypotheses on the relationship between mass media and the likelihood of civil conflict onset.

“HIGH” MEDIA FREEDOM MEDIA ENVIRONMENT

The media environment’s message mix is heterogeneous when the mass media institution enjoys a “high” level of media freedom. For the prospective rebels able to receive media messages, they are likely to consume non-regime messages due to their media environment dominance. Here, mass media takes on a watchdog role as the regime either has a laissez-faire approach to governing the mass media institution or is simply unable to constrain the mass media institution. In the watchdog role, mass media serves as the public’s sentinel, investigating and reporting on the regime’s policies, conduct, and potential malfeasance. Mass media not only verifies the regime’s official reports, it also undertakes investigative journalism that uncovers information the regime may not wish released to the public. In short, the watchdog media provides both informative and accurate information on the regime’s actual aggregate capabilities for the message-consuming population. However, when varying the level of media access in a “high” media freedom media environment, the effect on prospective rebels’ regime capabilities
perceptions is significant.

“HIGH” MEDIA FREEDOM AND “WIDESPREAD” MEDIA ACCESS

In states with a “high” level of media freedom and “widespread” media access, the watchdog media reports are available to the vast majority of the population and likely serve as an important, society-wide information source. Elite and Non-Elite prospective rebels alike are able to utilize mass media to gather information about the regime. Given that the watchdog media provides accurate information, both the Elite and Non-Elite prospective rebels likely form regime capabilities perceptions which accurately match the regime’s actual aggregate capabilities. However, this does not mean that states with a “high” level of media freedom and “widespread” media access have the highest likelihood of civil conflict onset. On the contrary, I argue that the likelihood of civil conflict onset is low in this media system type.

The regime’s either inability to control or decision not to control the mass media institution is a key factor in a state’s likelihood of civil conflict. When the regime does not constrain the mass media institution, mass media is free to take on the watchdog role, investigate the regime, and report about the malfeasance and capabilities findings. If the regime governs unjustly and has limited capabilities, the watchdog media is likely to report on it. As mass media is an important source of information on the regime for prospective rebels in both classes, they are likely to receive these non-regime media messages. Given the asymmetrical-weight of the non-regime message in this media environment, the Elite and Non-Elite prospective rebels will both likely form the perception of the regime that it is corrupt and unable to effectively combat a rebellion. As a result, the Elite and Non-Elite prospective rebels would likely calculate to rebel. Figure 3.4 illustrates the likely rebellion decisions for each class in this media system type.

Having said that, I argue that the likelihood of civil conflict onset is low for “high” media
freedom and “widespread” media access media system states. The reason rests with a regime’s office-maintaining interests. Regimes are aware of the mass media-induced audience cost risk to their power. The combination of the inability to or decision not to control the mass media institution and the latent threat of a population that is accurately informed about the regime’s activities and capabilities presents a daunting risk to the regime’s office-maintaining interests. Consequently, the regime is likely compelled to undertake two strategies.

First, the regime will likely establish laws to police its corruption. This reduces potential socio-economic grievances with the regime by both Elite and Non-Elite prospective rebels. Second, the regime will move towards a more transparent, inclusive system of government where socio-economic issues can be aired and solved, intra-institutionally. By offering inclusive political institutions, rebellion becomes a sub-optimal behavior for prospective rebels as the cost to induce political change is comparatively much lower through the regime than through rebellion. Thereby, rebellion is unlikely to occur in this media system type

I acknowledge that my institutional explanation is similar to the state capacity literature’s political institution thesis; democracies have a low likelihood of civil conflict onset. An important difference exists between my media system type explanation and the existing state capacity contention on the likelihood of civil conflict onset, however. While, like the existing scholarship, the media system type explanation describes how open political institutions decrease the likelihood of rebellion. Unlike the existing scholarship, the media system type explanation highlights why regimes are incentivized to become and remain an open political institution.

Moreover, the mass media-induced audience cost mechanism is a foundational point in the classical (de Tocqueville 1984 [1835]) and updated (Dahl 1971; Moravcsik 1997) Liberal theory. A free mass media that is accessible to large sector of society presents a significant
threat to weak and corrupt regimes. In order to minimize the risk of losing power to an accurately informed rebellion, the regime is likely to self-police and adopt an open government which, in effect, alters the prospective rebel’s cost calculus. In sum, states with a “high” level of media freedom and “widespread” media access likely experience a low probability of civil conflict onset.

“HIGH” MEDIA FREEDOM AND “LIMITED” MEDIA ACCESS

Media access is not always “widespread” in states with a “high” level of media freedom. This section discusses how the decrease in mass media access negatively affects the accuracy of regime capabilities perceptions for Non-Elite prospective rebels and ultimately the likelihood of
civil conflict onset. When the mass media institution has a “high” level of media freedom, I argue that the likelihood of civil conflict increases as the level of media access decreases in a state.

If a regime is unresponsive to the population and possesses sufficiently weak capabilities, it likely faces a rebellion threat by a widespread, accurately informed population when the level of media freedom is “high” and media access is “widespread”. As discussed above, regimes with this media system type reduce government corruption and institute a more transparent, inclusive form of government to minimize the rebellion threat and maximize office-maintaining interests. However, the regime’s incentive to self-police and maintain a politically-inclusive institution exists only when both mass media dimensions are “high”. While the society-wide threat of revolt deters the regime from abusing its power, this threat is only credible if society on the whole receives watchdog media messages. The impetus to revolt vanishes when the population does not know that the regime has weak capabilities and is abusing its power. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that the regime becomes less deterred from committing abuses of power and malfeasance increases to some degree as the level of media access decreases.

A population’s information about the regime is not uniformly affected when media access decreases in a state. I argue that media access bifurcates along class lines. Regardless of an aggregate media access decrease, the Elite class is likely to retain significant media access. However, the Non-Elite class is likely to experience the population’s decrease in media access. From an informational standpoint, the watchdog, non-regime media messages are still accessible for the Elite class. So, when gathering information about the regime’s capabilities, Elite prospective rebels are likely to use mass media as it is available to them, consume the accurate
and informative information on the regime’s aggregate capabilities, and thereby form perceptions which correctly mirror the regime’s actual aggregate capabilities. In sum, no informational and perceptual change is likely to exist for the Elite prospective rebel in “widespread” or “limited” media access states.

When the regime is perceived to be “weak”, the Elite prospective rebel is likely to calculate to rebel. As a high probability exists that the Elite prospective rebel maintains accurate aggregate capabilities information, their rebellion calculation is unlikely a suboptimal strategy. However, most prospective rebels do not come from the Elite class, rather, they primarily are Non-Elites. And, unlike the Elite class, it is probable that the Non-Elite class will receive less watchdog non-regime media messages as media access decreases.

Recall that Non-Elite prospective rebels rely more on personal experience and interpersonal discussion for their regime capabilities information as media access decreases. While these two information sources provide information on the regime’s capabilities, this information is likely only to provide a Non-Elite prospective rebel with localized and limited information on the regime’s capabilities. Consequently, a Non-Elite prospective rebel’s regime capabilities perception has a lower probability of accurately mirroring the regime’s actual aggregate capabilities.

A less accurate regime capabilities perception negatively affects the Non-Elite prospective rebel’s rebellion decision calculus which is analogous Fearon’s (1995) and Huth’s (1988; 1997) conclusions on the rational actor and incomplete information. A rational actor has a higher probability of determining sub-optimal decisions with limited information. Because a Non-Elite prospective rebel is likely to possess only localized regime capabilities when media access is “limited”, he or she is more prone to calculating one of the two sub-optimal rebellion
decisions. Figure 3.5 illustrates how localized information can produce sub-optimal rebellion behavior for the Non-Elite prospective rebel in a “high” media freedom and “limited” media access media system type.

The Non-Elite prospective rebel forms the accurate regime capabilities perception and likely calculates the optimal rebellion behavior when local information matches the aggregate capabilities. However, the Non-Elite prospective rebel’s “correct” rebellion behavior is not based on a strategic calculation; this calculus amounts to blind luck as the regime’s local capabilities simply happen to mirror its aggregate capabilities. That said, the Non-Elite’s “correct” decisions mirror the situational rebellion decisions from the “high” media freedom and “widespread” media access media system type. The Non-Elite prospective rebel’s two sub-optimal decisions are of greater interest as they present a difference in rebellion behavior between the “high” media freedom and “widespread” media access and “high” media freedom and “limited” media access media system types.

First, in the yield too little scenario, Elite prospective rebels likely receive informative, accurate information on the regime’s aggregate capabilities from mass media, form accurate perceptions, and calculate to remain noncombatants. Conversely, Non-Elite prospective rebels likely only receive local, limited information on the regime’s capabilities which suggests that the regime’s capabilities are weak. The Non-Elite prospective rebels form perceptions based on this limited information and determine the sub-optimal decision to rebel. I argue that a Non-Elite rebellion is likely to occur in this scenario for two reasons. First, while the Elite class likely has the accurate capabilities information, it has no incentive to restrain the Non-Elite prospective rebels. If a Non-Elite rebellion is able to weaken or unexpectedly defeat the incumbent regime, the Elite class could free ride on the regime change costs and win in the future. Second, the Elite
class may simply not have the ability to reach and inform the Non-Elite prospective rebels that rebellion is an undesirable decision. I assume that most people have social circles which reflect themselves and therefore Elite and Non-Elites are unlikely to socially overlap. Combining the two reasons, Elites have little interest in updating the Non-Elites on the regime’s capabilities and thus are unlikely to stretch their social circle to do so. In effect, the Non-Elite prospective rebels are free and able to behave against their rebellion interest and as a result a Non-Elite rebellion is likely to occur.

The Non-Elite’s second limited information miscalculation is to yield too much to the regime. Here, by virtue of receiving mass media messages, the Elite prospective rebels form accurate perceptions that the regime possesses weak capabilities and thus calculate to rebel.
However, because the Non-Elite prospective rebels only receive local, limited information which suggests that the regime’s capabilities are strong, they form regime capabilities perceptions that match this information. For example, a regime may have a military installation or a regime may conduct capture raids in this particular locale and Non-Elite prospective rebels form the perception that the regime is strong. As a result, the Non-Elite prospective rebels likely calculate to remain noncombatants when they should join the Elite prospective rebels in rebellion.

In this situation, the Non-Elite prospective rebels’ initial calculi are to remain noncombatants. However, due to the Elite prospective rebels’ interests and, interestingly, interpersonal discussion, I argue that rebellion is likely to occur in this scenario. First, it is plausible that the Elite prospective rebels rebel without the Non-Elites. However, this outcome seems unlikely given the probably few Elite prospective rebels versus the incumbent regime’s capabilities regardless of how weak it is. Consequently, unlike the Elite’s incentive to free ride in the yield too much scenario, the Elite prospective rebels are likely incentivized to expand their social circles and reach out to Non-Elite prospective rebels: they need foot soldiers.

While the Non-Elite prospective rebels have likely calculated to remain noncombatants, their reliance on interpersonal discussion for regime capabilities increases the susceptibility to persuasion. As Elite prospective rebels have a vested interest in mobilizing rebellion participation and possess more accurate information on the regime’s actual aggregate capabilities, I expect they expand their social circles and attempt to convince the Non-Elite prospective rebels to rebel. According to Lichbach (1995), a prospective rebel’s regime capabilities perception is a battleground between the rebel group and the incumbent regime. In the yield too much scenario, the Elite prospective rebels behave like Berejikian’s (1992) and Lichbach’s (1995) ‘rebel leader’ and attempt to solve the Non-Elite prospective rebel’s dilemmas
by reducing their perceived costs of rebellion. By sharing the watchdog media information, the Elite prospective rebels likely provide more accurate and informative information on the regime’s aggregate capabilities than the Non-Elite prospective rebels currently possess. The Non-Elite prospective rebels, due to this new information, likely crystallize a weak perception of the regime’s capabilities to combat a rebellion and subsequently calculate to rebel. Ultimately, due to Elite information, incentives, and persuasion, I anticipate rebellion to occur with at least some Non-Elite prospective rebel participation despite the expected yield too much sub-optimal calculation.

THE LIKELIHOOD OF CIVIL CONFLICT ONSET IN A “HIGH” MEDIA FREEDOM MEDIA ENVIRONMENT

Taking stock of these informational dynamics, I argue that an additive risk analysis demonstrates the likelihood of civil conflict onset between the “widespread” and “limited” media access states in a media freedom media environment. Said in a different way, I find that the likelihood of civil conflict onset can be determined by comparing the number of scenarios with which rebellion is a likely outcome. In probabilistic terms, the greater the number of rebellion outcome scenarios for each media system type, the greater the likelihood that the media system type experiences a civil conflict.

In the “high” media freedom and “widespread” media access media system type, both the Elite and Non-Elite prospective rebels likely receive mass media messages, form accurate regime capabilities perceptions, and “correctly” determine when to rebel. As shown in Figure 3.4, the prospective rebels from each class calculate to rebel when the incumbent regime possesses “weak” aggregate capabilities. The expected outcome is that two of the four scenarios produce rebellion; when the regime is “weak”, prospective rebels from both classes calculate rebellion. However, the regime has an office-seeking incentive to self-enforce its malfeasance and offer a
transparent, inclusive political institution which reduces the costs of socio-economic change for prospective rebels as compared to rebellion. So, I expect the likely risk of civil conflict onset is even less than the theoretical number of rebellion scenarios (two) in the “high” media freedom and “widespread” media access media system type.

In the “high” media freedom and “limited” media access media system type, only the Elite prospective rebels are likely to receive mass media messages, form accurate regime capabilities perceptions, and “correctly” determine when to rebel. The Non-Elite prospective rebels are unlikely to receive mass media messages. As a result, this class has a higher propensity to error in regime capabilities perception formation and thereby calculates a sub-optimal rebellion behavior. Illustrated in Figure 3.5, only in one scenario do both classes correctly calculate when to rebel. While rebellion is the outcome in the other two scenarios, the Non-Elite prospective rebels’ limited information plays a central role in their rebellion decision calculi. In sum, the expected outcome is that three of the four scenarios produce rebellion.

Moreover, I argue that the risk of civil conflict differs as the level of media access changes in a “high” media freedom media environment. Due to the difference in regime capabilities information, rebellion is the likely outcome of two scenarios in a “widespread” media access state and three scenarios in a “limited” media access state. I conclude that the likelihood of civil conflict onset increases as a state’s level of media access decreases in a “high” media freedom media environment.

“LOW” MEDIA FREEDOM MEDIA ENVIRONMENT

When the mass media institution has a “low” level of media freedom, the media environment’s message mix is homogenous. For those prospective rebels able to receive mass
media messages, they are likely to consume pro-regime messages due to their media environment dominance. Here, mass media takes on a propaganda role as the regime controls the mass media institution. Mass media-as-propaganda does not investigate or verify the regime’s reports; rather, it is used as a functionary by the regime to communicate specific messages that depict the regime’s policies, conduct, and capabilities in some favorable light. In short, media-as-propaganda provides informative but likely inaccurate information on the regime’s actual aggregate capabilities for the message-consuming population.

This section discusses how pro-regime messages likely influence how prospective rebels perceive the regime’s capabilities and their subsequent rebellion decision calculi. I argue that pro-regime messages manufacture strong regime perceptions and have a pacifying effect on rebellion behavior. However, this pacifying effect only occurs in the prospective rebels that receive the pro-regime message.

“LOW” MEDIA FREEDOM AND “WIDESPREAD” MEDIA ACCESS

In states with a “low” level of media freedom and a “widespread” level of media access, mass media is available to a large segment of society and pro-regime messages dominate the media environment. Given the dependence on mass media for aggregate capabilities information, it is likely an important information source for both the Elite and Non-Elite prospective rebels as they gather regime capabilities information. However, while mass media messages are informative, they are not necessarily accurate in this media system type. Due to office-maintaining interests, I argue that the regime will use its influence over the mass media institution to shape the definition of newsworthiness and the content of media messages in hopes to deter potential challenges when it possesses “weak” capabilities. By requiring media messages to include only those cues which espouse the regime’s “strong” and “effective”
capabilities, the regime attempts to manufacture the perception of capabilities strength.

Prospective rebels that receive these messages are likely to disregard the less “loud” non-regime messages received as the pro-regime messages are asymmetrically-weighted in the media environment. I anticipate prospective rebels to crystallize regime capabilities perceptions in line with the pro-regime cues: the regime is militarily “strong” and “effective” at finding its enemies. Consequently, even when the optimal, preferred strategy is to rebel, I expect both the Elite and Non-Elite prospective rebels are likely to perceive that the cost to rebel is too great and calculate to remain noncombatants due to pro-regime biased information.

Figure 3.6 illustrates how a “low” media freedom and “widespread” media access media system type influences Elite and Non-Elite prospective rebels’ rebellion decision calculi. First and foremost, the rebel outcome is noticeably absent when examining Figure 3.6. However, I set this conclusion aside for the moment. When the regime has “strong” aggregate capabilities, both the Elite and Non-Elite prospective rebels likely receive this information through mass media and thereby have a high probability of crystallizing a regime capabilities perception which mirrors reality. Given this perception, the prospective rebels are likely to calculate to remain noncombatants and Figure 3.6 illustrates this rebellion decision. Furthermore, similar to the “high” media freedom and “widespread” media access media system type, the Non-Elite prospective rebels disregard the limited information sources and calculate to remain noncombatants even when the Regime’s Local Capabilities are “weak”.

Unlike the “high” media freedom and “widespread” media access media system type, mass media messages likely do not include accurate information on the regime’s capabilities when a regime possesses “weak” aggregate capabilities in a “low” media freedom and “widespread” media access media system type. In this scenario, prospective rebels like receive
biased, pro-regime messages which aggrandize the regime’s capabilities. In Figure 3.6, when the Regime’s Aggregate Capabilities is “manufactured strong”, both the Elite and Non-Elite prospective rebels will likely receive and form regime capabilities perceptions akin to the “strong” and “effective” cues espoused in the pro-regime media messages. So, due to their dependence on mass media for aggregate capabilities information and the pro-regime bias in these messages, prospective rebels are likely to calculate to remain noncombatants even when the regime’s actual aggregate capabilities are “weak”. Moreover, I anticipate the likelihood of civil conflict onset to be low when a state’s media freedom level is “low” and the level of media access is “widespread”.

---

**Figure 3.6 Likely Rebellion Decisions in a “Low” Media Freedom and “Widespread” Media Access Media System Type by Class**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regime’s Local Capabilities</th>
<th>Regime’s Aggregate Capabilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Strong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elite: Noncombatant</td>
<td>Elite: Noncombatant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Elite: Noncombatant</td>
<td>Non-Elite: Noncombatant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufactured Strong</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elite: Noncombatant</td>
<td>Elite: Noncombatant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Elite: Noncombatant</td>
<td>Non-Elite: Noncombatant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“LOW” MEDIA FREEDOM AND “LIMITED” MEDIA ACCESS

Media access is not always “widespread” in states with a “low” level of media freedom. So, while mass media is likely available to the Elite class, the Non-Elite class experiences the state’s decrease in media access. Given this access decline, it is important to examine the impact that the confluence of a media-as-propaganda media environment with a “limited” media access level has on a prospective rebel’s rebellion decision calculus. I contend that the likelihood of civil conflict increases as the level of media access decreases when the mass media institution has a “low” level of media freedom.

A regime has two strategies to retain power when it possesses “weak” capabilities, cooptation and deterrence. As discussed in the “high” media freedom media system sections, a regime can attempt to co-opt its population by offering a more transparent, open form of government. However, I argue a regime is more likely to undertake the deterrence strategy if it affords the mass media institution a “low” level of media freedom. A regime attempts to manufacture idealized perceptions with its population by allowing mass media to only report its capabilities as being “strong” and “effective”. As discussed in the previous section, the deterrence strategy can pacify a population and thereby reduce the likelihood of civil conflict. But, the effectiveness of the deterrence strategy rests on one fundamental factor: the population must receive the pro-regime media messages in order to form the preferred perception and be deterred from rebellion.

A “limited” media access level affects a population, differently. Again, I argue that media access divides along class lines where the Elite class is likely to retain media access and the Non-Elite class is likely to not as media access decreases in a state. As a result, the Elite prospective rebels are likely to use mass media as it is an available information source when
gathering regime capabilities information. Given that the media environment is asymmetrically-weighted with the pro-regime message, Elite prospective rebels are likely to crystallize a “strong” regime capabilities perception regardless of the regime’s actual aggregate capabilities. Consequently, due to their continued ability to access media, Elite prospective rebels have a high propensity to calculate to remain noncombatants. In short, I do not anticipate an information or perceptual change for Elite prospective rebels in “widespread” or “limited” media access states when the level of media freedom is “low”.

For the Non-Elite prospective rebel, the rely more on personal experience and interpersonal discussion which likely provide only limited and localized regime capabilities information as media access decreases in a state. Non-Elite prospective rebels’ reliance on limited information affects the probability that their regime capabilities perceptions accurately match the regime’s actual aggregate capabilities. Ultimately, the probability Non-Elite prospective rebels’ rebellion decision calculi generate the optimal rebellion strategy decreases as the probability his or her regime capabilities perception is accurate decreases. Said in a different way, a Non-Elite prospective rebel is more prone to calculating sub-optimal rebellion behavior due to the increased likelihood he or she possesses limited regime capabilities information. Figure 3.7 illustrates the likely Elite and Non-Elite rebellion behaviors in a “low” media freedom and a “limited” media access media system type.

For the Elite prospective rebel, due to significant access to mass media, a high probability exists that they calculate to remain noncombatants like the “low” media freedom and “widespread” media access media system type. For the Non-Elite prospective rebels, they likely
crystallize accurate regime capabilities perceptions and calculate the optimal rebellion decision when the regime’s local and aggregate capabilities match as shown in Figure 3.7. However, these optimal rebellion decisions and behaviors are not based on strategic calculation, rather, the Non-Elite prospective rebels’ “optimal” strategies amount to blind luck as the local and aggregate capabilities simply happened to align.

Like in the “high” media freedom and “limited” media access media system type, the Non-Elite prospective rebels likely determine sub-optimal rebellion strategies in the other two scenarios. These sub-optimal decisions are yielding too little and yielding too much to the incumbent regime. In the yield too little scenario, Non-Elite prospective rebels likely only receive local and thereby limited information on the regime’s capabilities. This information
suggests the regime possesses “weak” capabilities when it actually has “strong” aggregate capabilities. Non-Elite prospective rebels probably form inaccurate regime capabilities perceptions and determine the sub-optimal decision to rebel because they did not receive mass media messages that would have informed them the opposite is true. Despite the fact that the Elite prospective rebels likely calculate the optimal rebellion strategy, to remain a noncombatant, they are unlikely to expand their social circles and inform the Non-Elites of their likely miscalculation. This inaction stems from the Elite prospective rebels’ incentive to free ride on a rebellion which challenges the regime. In short, despite the fact that Elite prospective rebels could inform Non-Elite prospective rebels that the regime’s aggregate capabilities are “strong”, I anticipate Non-Elite prospective rebels to calculate a sub-optimal rebellion behavior and rebellion to occur in this scenario.

In the yield too much scenario, the Non-Elite prospective rebels likely only receive local, limited information on the regime’s capabilities. This information suggests the regime possesses “strong” capabilities when it actually has “weak” aggregate capabilities. Non-Elite prospective rebels are likely to form inaccurate regime capabilities perceptions and determine the sub-optimal decision to remain a noncombatant as they did not receive mass media messages that would have informed them the opposite is true. While Non-Elite prospective rebels’ likely noncombatant rebellion behavior is the consistent across the “limited” media access media system types, I contend the probable rebellion outcome for this scenario differs due to the Elite’s rebellion strategy.

Recall in the “high” media freedom and “limited” media access media system type, I contend that the Elite prospective rebels are able to crystallize accurate regime capabilities perceptions and calculate the optimal rebellion strategy (to rebel) by virtue of receiving
watchdog mass media messages when the regime is aggregately “weak”. Due to the needs for foot soldiers to combat the regime, I argue the Elite are likely incentivized to inform the Non-Elite prospective rebels that the regime’s actual aggregate capabilities are “weak” and persuade them to join a rebellion. Due to Elite persuasion in this media system type, I argue some level of rebellion behavior occurs by the Non-Elite prospective rebels despite their initial noncombatant theoretical expectation.

I use this expectation as a comparison to the probable rebellion outcome for the same scenario in the “low” media freedom and “limited” media access media system type. Here, I anticipate the Elite prospective rebels receive pro-regime media messages, likely crystallize a “strong” regime capabilities perception, and thus calculate to remain noncombatants. Without the Elite’s accurate capabilities perception, their incentive to persuade Non-Elite prospective rebels to rebel, vanishes. Unlike the “high” media freedom and “limited” media access probable rebellion outcome, the likelihood Elite prospective rebels attempt to mobilize the Non-Elite prospective rebels is low as they, themselves probably calculate to remain noncombatants. Moreover, due to a collective problem, I argue that the probable rebellion outcome for this scenario in a “low” media freedom and “limited” media access media system type is consistent with the initial theoretical expectation: peace.

THE LIKELIHOOD OF CIVIL CONFLICT ONSET IN A “LOW” MEDIA FREEDOM MEDIA ENVIRONMENT

Once again, I use an additive risk measure to demonstrate the likelihood of civil conflict onset for the “low” media freedom media environment as media access varies. I argue that the relative risk of civil conflict onset within the “low” media freedom media environment can be determined by respectively totaling the number of scenarios when rebellion is the probable outcome for “widespread” and “limited” media access states and comparing them. Overall, I
contend that the greater the number of probable rebellion outcome scenarios in a media system type, the greater the likelihood that the media system type experiences civil conflict.

In the “low” media freedom and “widespread” media access media system type, both the Elite and Non-Elite prospective rebels likely receive mass media messages which are informative on the regime’s aggregate capabilities. When the regime’s aggregate capabilities are “strong”, both classes likely calculate to remain noncombatants regardless of the local capabilities information. However, when the regime’s aggregate capabilities are “weak”, the regime only allows pro-regime media messages on its capabilities to be reported. Given the “widespread” access to mass media, both the Elite and Non-Elite prospective rebels likely receive these pro-regime cues, crystallize a “strong” regime capabilities perception, and calculate to remain noncombatants. The expected rebellion outcome for a “low” media freedom and “widespread” media access media system type is zero.

In the “low” media freedom and “limited” media access media system type, only the Elite prospective rebels are likely to receive mass media messages. As a result, the Elite prospective rebels’ rebellion decisions likely match those in the “low” media freedom and “widespread” media access media system type. Conversely, the Non-Elite prospective rebels are unlikely to receive mass media messages and, given their limited information, they have higher probability to determine sub-optimal rebellion strategies. While the Non-Elite prospective rebels calculate to rebel two out of the four scenarios, limited information appears to be the derivative of these decisions: blind luck and the yield too little miscalculation. In sum, the “low” media freedom and “limited” media access media system type probable rebellion outcome is two.

In conclusion, I contend that the risk of civil conflict varies as the level of media access changes in a “low” media freedom media environment. The additive risk measurement suggests
the number of scenarios in which rebellion is the probable outcome differs between a “widespread” media access state and a “limited” media access state. The analysis proposes that the risk of rebellion is zero in a “widespread” media access state and two in a “limited” media access state. As a result, I conclude that the likelihood of civil conflict onset increases as a state’s level of media access decreases in a “low” media freedom media environment.

MASS MEDIA AND THE LIKELIHOOD OF CIVIL CONFLICT ONSET

To recap, I have articulated how information influences regime capabilities perceptions of prospective rebels. By identifying mass media as a potentially highly informative source of information, I argue the structural factors which affect the message (media freedom) and the reception (media access) shape how a prospective rebel perceives the regime’s capacity to combat rebellion. However, a well-developed civil conflict-mass media explanation must include both dynamics as these two structural factors are neither mutually exclusive nor isolated in reality. As such, I theorize how prospective rebels’ perceptions are likely affected in each of the four possible media system types as media freedom and media access covary.

In order to hypothesize on the likelihood of civil conflict onset within media freedom-media access covariance, I created a 2 x 2 matrix for each of the four media system types that are consistent with my theoretical explanations. Here, I tailored each matrix to the level and accuracy of the regime capabilities information available to the Elite and Non-Elite prospective rebels, respectively. As the structural media factors and the regime’s strength change, each matrix suggests the likely rebellion behavior, “Rebel” or “Noncombatant”, for each domestic class prospective rebel. Resultantly, each matrix illustrates the number of scenarios with which at least one domestic class prospective rebel calculates to rebel. In short, the higher the number
of rebellion scenarios in a matrix, the higher the risk that the media system type is likely to experience a civil conflict. By summing the number of rebellion scenarios for each matrix, I conclude the expected rebellion risk for each corresponding media system type.

Having determined the likely risk of rebellion for each media freedom type as media access varies, I argue that a comparison of these expectations illuminates how mass media likely affects the probability of civil conflict. Figure 3.8 plots the expected rebellion risk for each media freedom type by media access level and probabilistically illustrates the likelihood of civil conflict onset. Here, two important dynamics can be drawn from Figure 3.8 on the relationship between media freedom and media access and the likelihood of civil conflict.

First, states with "limited" media access are likely to demonstrate at least the same if not a higher probability of civil conflict onset than those with "widespread" media access. Looking to the "limited" media access column, these points are plotted at 3 and 2 on the probability of civil conflict onset y-axis. Conversely, the "widespread" column has a uniformly lower point plotting of 2 and 0. As such, Figure 3.8 shows the likelihood of civil conflict increases as a state's media access level decreases.

Second, Figure 3.8 also shows that the level of media freedom has a structural effect on the probability of civil conflict onset as it illustrates a variation between "high" and "low" media freedom media environments. Notice that all four media system type points are distinctly plotted. Had the solid and open points in either or both of the media access columns overlapped, the practical implication would be that no variance exists between the "high" and "low" media freedom media environments. However, as four distinct points exist, Figure 3.8 shows that media freedom likely has some structural effect on the probability of civil conflict. Furthermore, the orchestration of the points indicates the likely nature of media freedom's structural effect.
Figure 3.8 shows that both the “high” media freedom solid points are plotted higher on the probability of civil conflict onset y-axis than the "low” media freedom open points. Interestingly, this implies a media freedom-civil conflict relationship exists that is counter to the established literature’s findings. In short, Figure 3.8 demonstrates that "high" media freedom media environments are more likely to experience civil conflict than "low” media freedom ones. By combining these two preliminary media freedom results, the likelihood of civil conflict onset increases as the level of media freedom increases.

Overall, Figure 3.8 shows that media access has a general directional effect consistent across both media freedom types as the lines slope in the same direction. In brief, “limited” media access states are more likely to experience civil conflict than “widespread” ones. Figure 3.8 also shows that the level of media freedom bears a structural effect on the likelihood of civil conflict. Here, the four media system points are distinctly plotted and the “high” media freedom
media environment is uniformly more likely to experience a civil conflict. Therefore, consistent with my theoretical contentions and explanations, I argue that media freedom and media access have an interactive effect on the likelihood of civil conflict. This interactive effect is demonstrated in the totality of the following three hypotheses.

Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 2 demonstrate the interactive effect of media freedom and media access on the likelihood of civil conflict onset. As evidenced in Figure 3.8, the likelihood of civil conflict onset increases as media access decreases regardless of the level of media freedom. Hypothesis 3’s inclusion accomplishes two important features. First, it demonstrates that media freedom has a structural influence on the likelihood of civil conflict. Without Hypothesis 3, the combination of Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 2 would suggest that media access is independently responsible for any change in the likelihood of civil conflict which would be neither indicative of my theoretical contentions nor Figure 3.8.

Second, Hypothesis 3 provides a nuanced positioning of the solid points (“high” media freedom) as compared to the open points (“low” media freedom). While the slopes of the lines can be determined in Hypothesis 1 and Hypothesis 2, it is impossible to rank or value them on the y-axis without an anchoring, “compared to what” hypothesis. In short, by comparing the media environments, Hypothesis 3 demonstrates media freedom’s structural effect on the likelihood of civil conflict.

Hypothesis 1: When the level of media freedom is “high”, the likelihood of civil conflict decreases as a state’s level of media access increases.

Hypothesis 2: When the level of media freedom is “low”, the likelihood of civil conflict decreases as a state’s level of media access increases.

Hypothesis 3: By comparison, “high” media freedom media environments are more likely to experience civil conflict than “low” media freedom media environments.
CONCLUSION

I conclude Chapter III with the same question I opened with: why do prospective rebels decide to rebel? There are many reasons why an individual prospective rebel chooses to rebel and the existing civil conflict onset literature has examined a host of them. However, I find that a fundamental dynamic has gone under-explored in the civil conflict onset literature: the roles incomplete information and mass media play in affecting the likelihood of civil conflict.

As discussed in Chapter II, the state capacity thesis has become a primary predictor of civil conflict onset in recent years. The state capacity thesis suggests civil conflicts occur when the regime is sufficiently “weak”. But, when considering this assertion at the individual prospective rebel level, short of suggesting that they maintain complete information, the state capacity literature offers few clues as to a prospective rebel’s informational wherewithal to make this assumed “weak” versus “strong” regime capabilities delineation. As a result, the existing literature leaves scholars to wonder, “if not completely informed, where do prospective rebels get their regime capabilities information in order to make this rebellion decision calculus?”

My dissertation embraces the notions that 1) a prospective rebel likely possesses incomplete information, 2) a prospective rebel likely makes his or her rebellion decision calculus based on a contrived perception of the regime’s capabilities, and 3) this regime capabilities perception is crystallized from the information acquired by the prospective rebel. Combining these dynamics, I contend that the information available to prospective rebels likely influences what perception crystallizes and the subsequently calculated rebellion behavior. Given that mass media is a potentially unrivaled source of information on the regime’s aggregate capabilities, I propose it has a particular influence on a prospective rebel’s regime capabilities perception. As mass media can be manipulated by regimes and not equitably accessible to all prospective rebels,
I suggest it incorporates a natural variance across countries as well as within domestic populations. Overall, I argue two mass media factors, media freedom and media access, structurally affect a prospective rebel’s level of and accuracy of information on the regime’s capabilities to combat a rebellion. Using Zaller’s RAS model and crossover effect, I theorize how certain prospective rebels’ regime capabilities perceptions are likely shaped as these two structural factors covary in scope. I conclude Chapter III with three hypotheses which articulate my contention that mass media has a particular effect on the likelihood of civil conflict.

Moreover, Chapter III represents an important theoretical advancement in the civil conflict onset literature. By acknowledging prospective rebel incomplete information and theorizing on mass media’s varying effect on regime capabilities perception, the media freedom and media access interaction theoretical explanation fills a significant informational gap in the literature. In the next chapter, I quantify my media freedom and media access contention and empirically examine its relationship with the likelihood of civil conflict onset. Focusing on the 1993 to 2004 time frame, I test whether the media freedom-media access interaction term is a significant predictor of civil conflict onset when controlling for a host of noteworthy variables from the existing conflict literature. I conclude Chapter IV with a robustness check and a discussion of the results.
CHAPTER VI: ANALYSIS

Chapter VI empirically examines my proposed relationship between mass media and the likelihood of civil conflict onset. First, I describe the data employed to test my hypotheses. Next, I discuss the research design and articulate how it appropriately analyzes the different effects that the mass media conceptual dimensions have on the likelihood of civil conflict onset. Then, I detail the dependent variable, the three mass media-specific predictor variables, and the civil conflict onset literature control variables. After presenting the research method, data, and timeframe of analysis, I conduct the primary and supporting empirical tests. Chapter VI concludes with a “most similar” controlled experiment and a discussion of the results.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Chapter VI empirically tests Chapter III’s hypothesized relationships between mass media and the likelihood of civil conflict onset. I employ Uppsala/PRIO’s Armed Conflict dataset to analyze this relationship (Gleditsch et al 2002). The Armed Conflict dataset is a country-level time series which identifies civil conflict episodes. I use Uppsala/PRIO’s definition of civil conflict: 1) a militarized event that occurs between a state actor and internal opposition group which 2) experiences at least twenty-five conflict-related deaths in a calendar year. The dataset has 235 civil conflict onset events. The dataset includes only those states with populations greater than one million in 1993. The timeframe of analysis is 1993 to 2004, however, this decision requires further explanation.
TIMEFRAME OF ANALYSIS

Mass media is a dynamic entity. When considering mass media’s effect on another phenomenon, it is paramount to first ask “at what point in time” as mass media has constantly evolved over time. For example, consider mass media’s evolution in Western Civilization. In the 13th century, books and official decrees by the Catholic Church and/or a feudal lord made up mass media. Post-Gutenberg press and the subsequent explosion of vernacular literacy and the printed word, newspapers and pamphlets were new forms of mass media in European countries and their colonies. In the Nineteenth, Twentieth, and Twenty-first centuries, technological advancements in mass media occurred in much quicker succession. The invention and commercial usage of radio (1895), television (1928), satellite television (1972), and finally internet (1989) each present informational watershed moments in the advancement of mass media. I argue it is important to be cognizant of mass media history when determining a timeframe of analysis as each new mass media technological advancement represents a new way for people to receive information. By not accounting for all forms of mass media, selecting a timeframe of analysis that overlaps a new mass media technological advancement can skew empirical results (Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur 1976). Moreover, while scholars examine on many different timeframes, I argue it is important to select a timeframe of analysis which not only accounts for global political affairs but also mass media dynamics.

I determine the timeframe of analysis is 1993 to 2004 due to three factors which are mass media data availability, the Cold War, and the internet’s global proliferation. First, Freedom House’s press freedom rating data is a primary dataset for press freedom analyses (e.g. Norris 2004; Vultee 2009). While Freedom House provides a press freedom rating by country by year from 1971 to present, the coding scale underwent a substantive change in 1992 to 1993. Pre-
1993, Freedom House coded a state's level of press freedom on a 1 (high), 2 (medium), 3 (low) scale. 1993 to present, Freedom House expanded the scale to 0 to 100 to demonstrate nuanced press freedom differences between states. In order to use the more comprehensive press freedom coding, the beginning of the timeframe of analysis must be 1993 or after.

Second, 1993 presents a global political affairs breakpoint as well. The Cold War is shown to have some effect on civil war onset (Zakaria 2003; Lacina 2004) and a timeframe that begins in 1993 can control for this effect. Third, 2004 is the chosen as the final year of analysis due to the internet’s global proliferation. When considering consumption, nature, and political opinion effect, the internet is unlike the other mass media types (e.g. Xenos and Moy 2007). Consequently, because internet is such a distinct form of mass media, I exclude it from my mass media definition. However, the decision to exclude internet from my mass media definition has a delimiting effect on the timeframe of analysis. As discussed above, if internet is an important form of mass media in the years examined but internet is not contemplated in the mass media definition, the tests risk skewed results. While no definitive breakpoint year exists, 2004 makes theoretical sense due to two factors. In 2004, internet became an important, mainstream source of political information in developed countries (Rainie, Cornfield, and Horrigan, 2005). Also in 2004, the developing world began a near-exponential increase in personal internet usage (International Telecommunications Union Statistics 2013). Given the internet’s rise in global usage and importance, I make 2004 the final year in the timeframe of analysis in order to exclude it from the mass media definition. Moreover, due to mass media data availability, the Cold War, and the internet’s global proliferation, I determine a 1993 to 2004 timeframe of analysis.
RESEARCH METHOD

I test my hypotheses on the likelihood of civil conflict onset by means of logistic regression and the statistical package Clarify. First, given the research question, logistic regression is both an appropriate model to estimate the probability of a civil conflict event occurrence and is a commonly used approach in the civil conflict onset literature (e.g. Fearon and Laitin 2003; Collier and Hoeffler 2004; Salehyan and Gleditsch 2006). Second, as Civil Conflict Onset is a binary coded dependent variable, the civil conflict observations likely demonstrate some level of temporal dependence over time where the probability of civil conflict recurring is increased soon after the previous conflict (Beck, Katz, and Tucker 1998). Using Carter and Signorino’s (2010) cubic polynomial method, I address time dependence by including the Time, Time2, and Time3 variables. Third, when using country-level time-series data, often times correlations exist between a country’s observation years. This intra-class correlation can bias the standard errors of the estimates and diminish the results. To avoid intra-class correlation, I cluster the data by country code to obtain corrected, robust standard errors (UCLA Statistical Consulting Group 2014). Fourth, I employ Clarify to gain a more nuanced understanding how mass media specifically influences the likelihood of civil conflict onset. Clarify illustrates the predicted probability of civil conflict in point-to-point variation. In short, Clarify offers a statistical way to isolate the “high” and “low” media freedom media environments and demonstrate the point-to-point predicted probability of civil conflict onset as the level of media access varies. Fifth, I use Stata 13.0 statistical package to estimate all models.
DEPENDENT AND PREDICTOR VARIABLES

_Civil Conflict Onset_ is the dependent variable as the research question considers the effect mass media has on the likelihood a country experiences civil conflict. The dependent variable includes data on intrastate and internationalized intrastate conflicts where the state in question is classified as State A. _Civil Conflict Onset_ is coded as 1 for the year when a civil conflict initiates, for the subsequent years of the same conflict it is coded as missing, and 0 if conflict does not occur in that year, for each state. For states that experience overlapping civil conflict episodes, I code the observation year when the new conflict begins as 1 during an existing civil conflict (Saleyhan and Gleditsch 2006). If a civil conflict episode reinitiates within two calendar years after the termination date, I consider it an extension of the terminated episode (Cunningham, Gleditsch and Saleyhan 2009). I code the inter-episode peace years as well as the reinitiated conflict episode years as ongoing conflict years. Lastly, a left censored data problem exists as several civil conflicts that began pre-1993 continued into the 1993 to 2004 timeframe of analysis. I exclude all civil conflict episodes that began prior to January 1st, 1993 due to this dissertation's focus on civil conflict onset.

MASS MEDIA PREDICTOR VARIABLES

My primary independent variable is _Mass Media System_ which is an interaction of a state’s level of media freedom and the level of media access. This represents my theoretical addition to the civil conflict literature. To create the _Mass Media System_ variable, I begin with _Media Freedom_ and _Media Access_ and then interact the two variables. I include _Media Freedom_ and _Media Access_ in the model for two reasons. First, per Brambor, Clark, and Golder (2006), the variables that make up an interaction term must be included in the model as to avoid biased inferences. And, second, _Media Freedom_ represents the existing literature’s current mass media
explanation of civil conflict. The next several paragraphs operationalize each of the three media predictor variables.

The data on *Media Freedom* is taken from Freedom House's press freedom statistics. Here, Freedom House measures the level of freedom a state affords to the press. The variable is an index of several factors such as level of media censorship and level of government control over media outlets. It is scored on a 100 point scale for each state, by year. A state with a 0 score is the most free and a 100 is the least free. Given the existing literature on mass media and civil conflict, as the *Media Freedom* score increases, a state is more likely to experience civil conflict (e.g. Vultee 2009). The expectation for *Media Freedom* is positive signed and significant result.

*Media Access* measures the ability of individuals to receive media messages in each state, by year. The operationalization of "ability" is the important part of *Media Access*. While an individual may desire to receive mass media messages, he or she must have access to mass media in order to actually receive the messages. Logically, the more media devices in a state, the more accessible mass media is for a population. Applying this logic to the prospective rebel and incomplete information, the greater the number of media devices in a state, the more likely Non-Elite prospective rebels have access to mass media information, and thus the more likely they will receive aggregate regime capabilities information.

Like Norris (2004), I gauge a state’s level of media access by the number of media devices present, divided by the population of the state. However, unlike Norris (2004), *Media Access* is not based on a mass media index. Rather, the mass media metrics that make up *Media Access* are determined by a timeframe of analysis and the nature of specific mass media mediums. First, I exclude internet from *Media Access*. Given the timeframe of analysis, internet
accessibility likely examines whether the state is developed or not. According to the International Telecommunications Union (ITU), a high correlation between gross domestic product (GDP) and internet accessibility exists. If internet accessibility were included in *Media Access*, any relationship between it and civil conflict onset would not be examining media effect on prospective rebels but the level of development. As a result, I exclude internet accessibility from my definition of *Media Access*.

Second, unlike Norris (2004), I exclude the number of newspapers per 1,000 people for each state, by year from the *Media Access* variable. While newspapers are a central feature in many media effect studies (e.g. Zaller 1992; Loveless 2009), most of these analyses occur in the United States, Canada, and European Union countries where the levels of social infrastructure are high and negligibly different. The level of social infrastructure development, specifically the education system, influences a country’s literacy rate. So, newspapers might be readily available, but an individual must possess a certain level of education in order to gather information from the newspaper article. In fact, individuals must not only be able to read, but do so at a relatively high level as to comprehend the regime capabilities messages incorporated in the newspaper article. Discussions on troop detachments, military technology, military and police spending and activities, etc. require a vocabulary that is beyond the elementary level. In short, while newspapers are often included in developed states’ media effect studies, newspapers complicate global media access studies as message reception can be hindered despite availability. As such, I exclude newspapers from the *Media Access* definition.

*Media Access* is defined as the number of televisions per 1,000 people, by state, by year and gathered from World Bank’s World Development Indicators dataset. As a mass media medium, television is theoretically attractive for two reasons which are global proliferation and
low education usage requirements. First, new mass media technology has a global proliferation lag period; whereas developed countries typically purchase and use new technologies before developing countries are able to do so. The internet’s global proliferation illustrates this point perfectly. Television and television broadcasting, unlike the internet, is not a new mass media medium. It has had 60 plus years to transition from a new technology that is largely present only in developed countries to becoming a global mass media mainstay. So, while more televisions are present developed countries than developing countries, this television variance is not due to the lag of new technology proliferating to the developing world.

Second, individuals do not need as high of an education level to consume information from television as compared to a newspaper. Unlike newspapers, literacy is not as necessary for individuals to consume information from television as news anchors and pundits provide information to the viewers by describing some phenomenon. While charts and graphs may be used in the explanation, the viewer is likely able to glean at least some of the content provided in the supporting materials by listening to the on-air speaker’s discussion of the phenomenon. Moreover, by using television as the Media Access metric, I argue that the social infrastructure proxy concerns central to the newspaper mass media medium are reduced.

In sum, I use television sets per 1,000 people by state, by year to proxy a country's level of access to the media. Television is an attractive metric as it avoids the theoretical concerns present in the internet and newspaper mass media mediums. While no examinations exist on the relationship between Media Access and civil conflict onset, I expect civil conflict is less likely to occur as a state’s level of media access increases. Overall, the expectation for Media Access is negatively signed and a significant result.
The final mass media variable is *Media Interaction* which is the interaction of *Media Freedom* and *Media Access*. Recall Figure 3.8. In order to make the theoretical explanation easier, I separated the interaction into “high” and “low” media freedom media environments and then considered how perception, behavior, and likelihood of civil conflict onset changes within each media environment as the level of media access changes. As a result, I determined two lines, one for each media freedom environment, which were plotted in Figure 3.8. *Media Interaction* is not categorized in this way; rather, it considers the overall interactive effect of *Media Freedom* and *Media Access* on the likelihood of civil conflict onset. In practice, only one line would be represented on Figure 3.8 had I theorized and plotted the media freedom-media access interaction this way. Translating Figure 3.8’s depictions and Hypothesis 1’s and Hypothesis 2’s conjectures to the empirical test of *Media Interaction*, I predict a graphical result that lies between Figure 3.8’s two lines as the slopes of the “high” and “low” media freedom media environments are tangential. Overall, I expect civil conflict onset is less likely as *Media Interaction* increases; whereas *Media Interaction* is negatively signed and a significant result.

**CONTROL VARIABLES**

Chapter III argues a relationship exists between mass media and civil conflict onset. However, before drawing any conclusions, it is important to consider these factors in conjunction with other factors. The civil conflict onset literature has produced a host of significant findings and it is essential to control for these dynamics when examining the proposed mass media-civil conflict relationship. This section discusses the theoretical arguments for many of these factors, operationalizes these contentions into variables for testing, and offers expectations on the impact on civil conflict onset.
STATE CAPACITY

The state capacity literature suggests that a prospective rebel's decision to rebel is affected by the regime's ability to both address for grievances and coercively deter rebellious behavior. On one hand, states with open, redistributive political systems are better able to accommodate prospective rebel grievances which likely reduce their need to act extra-institutionally for political change. On the other hand, states with coercive institutions deter rebellion by presenting high costs of rebellion and a low likelihood of success to prospective rebels. As a result, the more a state is able to deter prospective rebels from rebelling; civil conflict is less likely to occur.

Hendrix (2010) divides state capacity into three theoretical definitions which are military capacity, bureaucratic effectiveness, and the quality and coherence of the political institution. The state capacity literature has argued that each conceptual dimension effects prospective rebels' rebellion decision calculus and shown to impact the likelihood of civil conflict onset. As such, I incorporate at least one measure for each of these state capacity theoretical definitions. First, military capacity is commonly defined as a "state's ability to deter or repel challenges to its authority with force" (Hendrix 2010; 47). The theoretical argument for military capacity suggests that prospective rebels take into account the strength of the regime's military when deciding whether or not to revolt. A military represents the regime's capacity to protect its position of authority, the strength of the military is shown to be an important factor in a prospective rebel's calculus.

The state capacity often uses Military Personnel Per Capita to represent military strength (e.g. Mason and Fett 1996; Jones, Bremer, and Singer 1996; Balch-Lindsay and Enterline 2000; DeRouen and Sobek 2004). Using Correlates of War (COW) National Capabilities data, I
employ *Military Personnel Per Capita* to measure the regime's capability to project strength and deter rebellion. The literature has determined the larger the military, the lower the likelihood of civil conflict onset. I expect *Military Personnel Per Capita* to be negatively signed and significant.

States are not chessboards; the terrain of a country matters. The literature finds a state is more likely to experience a civil conflict as terrains become rougher. Terrain, specifically mountainous terrain, confounds the power projection of a regime's military (Collier and Hoeffler 2004). Traversing the geography to engage the rebel group, combating an enemy protected from artillery fire and with high-ground positions, and the ultimate difficulty in rooting out rebels from caves makes mountainous terrain particularly challenging for a regime's military. These advantages are not lost on rebel leaders. Mountainous terrain presents a powerful persuasion point for rebel leaders to reduce a prospective rebel's concerns over regime discovery, capture, and death. In short, the likelihood of civil conflict onset increases as the terrain of a state becomes rougher. For *Rough Terrain*, I use the mountainous coding of A.J. Gerard (2000) for each state, by year.

Bureaucratic effectiveness is often included in state capacity analyses. In the most general sense, bureaucratic effectiveness examines the regime's ability to effectively collect and process information. State capacity scholars argue that bureaucratic effectiveness measures how well a regime can determine who is a rebel and he or she are located in the state (DeRouen and Sobek 2004; Fearon and Laitin 2003). One of the primary ways to measure a state's bureaucratic effectiveness is the regime's ability to generate revenue.

Fearon and Laitin (2003) contend that the greater the gross domestic product per capita, the more revenue a regime extracts, and thus the greater the likelihood it invests in and possesses
a strong bureaucracy. The authors demonstrate this variable has a negative effect on the probability of civil conflict onset. However, Ross (1999) argues that gross domestic product per capita is not necessarily a straight-forward measure of bureaucratic capacity. He finds that regimes with economies dependent on primary commodity exports possess a different type of bureaucracy. Termed rentier states, these regimes are less likely to develop a strong administrative institution due to the reduced need to generate tax revenue from society. In rentier states, when gross domestic product may be high, the strength of the bureaucracy is often times low.

I incorporate both of these state capacity measures of bureaucratic effectiveness. The data for GDP Per Capita is derived from the World Bank's World Development Indicators dataset. GDP Per Capita is included for each state, by year. Ross (2006), Fearon (2004b), and Collier and Hoeffler (2004) argue and find that oil-producing states are the most demonstrative of the rentier state effect on bureaucratic strength. For example, Ross (2006) examines the relationship between diamond production and civil conflict onset and determines only mixed results. As a result, I code Oil 1 if 33% or more of a state's GDP is based on oil-production and 0 if otherwise. This operationalization mirrors Fearon and Laitin's (2003) and Ross's (2006) oil variable coding. The data comes from Fearon and Laitin's (2003), Ross (2006), and the CIA World Factbook. The expectation for Oil is a positive signed and significant and GDP Per Capita is a negative signed and significant effect on the likelihood of civil conflict.

While GDP Per Capita and Oil measure the level or strength of a regime's bureaucracy, these concepts have a difficult time capturing the effect political transitions have on bureaucratic effectiveness. Sambanis (2001), Hegre et al (2001), and Fearon and Laitin (2003) argue and show that regimes with recent political transitions (be it either democratization or autocratic
backsliding) are particularly vulnerable to rebellion. *Regime Instability* presents an intriguing causal mechanism that ties-in with the prospective rebel and perception. When political change occurs, it "indicate[s] disorganization and weakness" in the regime (Fearon and Laitin 2003; 81). These changes often include new policies, agendas, and a general governmental restructuring which likely has a bureaucratic ripple-effect. This political upheaval presents a specifically appealing time for prospective rebels to revolt as the bureaucracy is perceived to be functioning at less than peak performance. Like Sambanis (2001), I code 1 if a state experienced a three-or-more Polity2 score increase or decrease in the three year period prior to each year and 0 if otherwise. I anticipate *Regime Instability* to be positive signed and highly significant.

The third theoretical dimension is the quality and coherence of the political institution. The state capacity literature suggests that regime type impacts the likelihood of civil conflict. Applying principles from the democratic peace literature, Fearon and Laitin (2003) argue that "political democracy should be associated with less discrimination and repression...and thus lower grievances" (Fearon and Laitin 2003; 79). Regan and Norton (2005) determine that regime type has a puzzlingly positive and significant effect on the likelihood of rebellion. Regime type has some effect on civil conflict onset however the direction and significance is in question. Other research contends that regime type has a curvilinear, inverted-U relationship with regards to the probability of civil conflict onset. Hegre et al (2001) and Muller and Weede (1990) conclude that both the inclusive policies of highly democratic regimes and the repressive institutions of highly autocratic regimes reduce the likelihood of civil conflict. Anocracies, regimes which are neither inclusive enough to afford prospective rebels the ability to satisfy grievances through the regime or repressive enough to dissuade revolt, demonstrate the highest probability of civil war.
Both of these state capacity theoretical arguments are incorporated into the analysis. I employ POLITY IV data (Marshall and Jaggers 2001) to represent a regime's level of political inclusiveness. For Regime Type, I begin with POLITY IV's Polity2 score but recode the data from a -10 to +10 range to a 0 to 20 range. Here, 0 represents highly autocratic regimes and 20 highly democratic regimes. Regime Type-Squared utilizes the same Polity2 scores as Regime Type, however, the score is squared to allow for a curvilinear estimation. Both variables, Regime Type and Regime Type-Squared, are coded for each state, by year. The expectation for Regime Type is a positive signed but an insignificant result. For Regime Type-Squared, I anticipate a positive signed and significant outcome.

OPPORTUNITY AND GRIEVANCE VARIABLES

The civil conflict literature identifies several variables which provide for "atypical circumstances that generate profitable opportunities" to rebel (Collier and Hoeffler 2004; 564). I include four opportunity factors each of which argue to increase the likelihood of civil conflict onset. These are Economic Growth, Population, Ethnic Fractionalization, and Religious Fractionalization.

Prospective rebels are likely to have suffered a reduction in income when the state's economy has slowed. Rebel groups offer payment for rebellion services rendered which becomes an attractive way for prospective rebels to replace foregone income (Alesina et al 1996; Collier and Hoeffler 2004). Economic Growth is used to proxy this foregone income theoretical argument. Here, I utilize World Development Indicator's growth rate data. I code the increase or decrease in each state's GDP from the preceding year. Similar to Alesina et al (1996), I anticipate the likelihood of civil conflict onset to increase when the preceding year's growth rate was negative.
Population is used in many civil conflict onset examinations. However, population is incorporated for two different theoretical reasons. First, Fearon and Laitin (2003) argue that population presents a pseudo-bureaucratic effectiveness measure. A regime's bureaucracy faces an increasingly difficult task at monitoring and effectively deterring rebellion as the population of the state grows. Therefore, a state is more likely to experience civil conflict, the larger the population of the state. Second, Lichbach (1995) contends that the larger the population, the greater the prospective rebel pool for rebel leaders to coopt. Once again, the likelihood of civil conflict onset increases as the population of a state grows. My examination is unable to separate and determine which causal mechanism is driving Population's positive effect on civil conflict likelihood. However, as both theoretical arguments articulate the same directional effect on civil conflict onset, I expect a similar result and leave the nuanced study for future research. The data for Population is taken from World Development Indicator's dataset and is coded for each state, by year.

When considering the effect population has in a cross-national study, not all populations are created equal. A population's demographic differences matter for prospective rebel mobilization. Easterly and Levine (1997), Alesina et al (2003), Collier (2001), Reynal-Querol (2002), Eldabawi and Sambanis (2000), and Collier and Hoeffler (2004) argue that a low level of social and/or religious diversity in a state aids a rebel group's ability to attract and mobilize the greatest number of prospective rebels possible. As a state's diversity or fractionalization increases, ethnic and/or religious differences form additional barriers for prospective rebel mobilization. These barriers complicate a rebel leader's ability to coopt prospective rebels. I code Ethnic Fractionalization and Religious Fractionalization from Alesina et al's (2003) dataset. This coding reflects the probability that two arbitrary selected individuals will not share
an ethnic or religious affiliation, respectively, for each country, by year. I have no expectations for Ethnic Fractionalization and Religious Fractionalization given the mixed results in the civil conflict literature for these variables.

GRIEVANCE

The civil conflict literature's grievance explanations contend that noncombatants are not compelled to rebel by opportunistic situations. Rather, rebellion is motivational; prospective rebels choose to rebel due to political exclusion and social or ethnic subjugation. I include Ethnic Dominance from the grievance literature. Horowitz (1985) and Huntington (1996) argue that the relationship between ethnicity and politics often serve as a foundation for rebellion. When an ethnic group is unable to address and satisfy its socio-economic grievances through the political institution, it is forced to seek status quo change through extra-institutional action. The civil conflict literature identifies how political grievances can lead to an increased likelihood of civil conflict. Ethnic political grievances can be a product of a state's demographic makeup. When a substantial ethnic majority exists in a state, minority ethnic groups' abilities to solve their problems through the political institution are hampered. While it is easy to imagine situations of ethnic domination in autocracies, a vote along ethnic lines can also effectively block minority ethnicities from political institution solutions to grievances in democracies, too.

Similar to Collier and Hoeffler's (2004) procedure, I code Ethnic Dominance as 1 when a single ethnicity represents 49% or more of a country’s population and 0 if otherwise. The data for Ethnic Dominance is taken from three sources. I began with CIA World Factbook data on a state's ethnic demography. I cross-referenced Ellingsen (2000) if CIA World Factbook did not numerically describe a state's ethnic demographic makeup. Timor-Leste's and Tonga's ethnicity information was absent from both Ellingsen (2000) and CIA World Factbook, so I employed

**DATA**

As with many empirical examinations, several variables have missing values in the dataset. While the dependent variable is complete, the media predictor and many of the control variables have missing values which not only diminishes the usefulness of the information it can also lead to biased estimations (King, Honaker, Joseph, and Scheve 2001). For logistic regression, missing values are troubling event models and particularly so when the event count is low. Here, missing values increase the likelihood that event observations are dropped which likely biases the estimations. In order to avoid these problems, I employ multiple imputation to replace the missing values in the dataset.

Developed by Rubin (1987), multiple imputation is a methodological way for researchers to use all the observation, including those with missing values, in a dataset. Per Schaefer’s (1997; 2000) and Rubin’s (1987) assumptions on multivariate normal data distribution, parameters of the imputed data can be estimated using the observed data. The conditional distributions from the observed data provide imputed values for the missing values by forming five imputed datasets. Using “Rubin’s Rules”, estimates from the *n* datasets are created and then merged to generate a single imputed value for each missing value.

I use *Stata* 13 to perform the multiple imputation procedure. Due to missing values, the original dataset includes only 1555 of 1883 country-year observations. The variables I register (variables not contemplated in the imputation process) are *Civil Conflict Onset*, *Country Code*, *Year*, *Prior Conflict*, *Time*, *Time2*, and *Time3*. The variables I include in the imputation model
are Media Freedom, Media Access, Media Interaction, Military Personnel Per Capita, GDP Per Capita, Oil, Regime Type, Regime Type Squared, Regime Instability, Ethnic Fractionalization, Religious Fractionalization, Ethnic Dominance, Economic Growth, and Population. In order to better fit with the multivariate normal data distribution assumptions, I use the natural log of Population before imputing the missing values. As Ethnic Dominance, Oil, and Regime Instability are binary variables, I round the imputed values to zero or one, whichever is closer. I generate five imputed datasets and convergence in distribution occurs after 19 iterations per the EM algorithm. The multiple imputation dataset includes 1883 country-year observations. Overall, multiple imputation is an attractive statistical tool to replace missing values and strengthen estimations.

The logistic regression results of the non-multiple imputation dataset. As a check, the mass media predictor variables produce similar results when comparing the results of the non-multiple imputation and the multiple imputation dataset results. This suggests that the multiple imputation procedure did not holistically alter the likelihood of civil conflict onset estimations. Feel free to contact me for the non-multiple imputation estimations.

In review, the focus of this chapter is to empirically examine the hypothesized relationship between mass media and the likelihood of civil conflict. To this point, I have transformed the mass media concepts hypothesized in Chapter III into measurable variables for quantitative analysis, outlined a research design and dependent variable which appropriately test the research question, and presented two statistical methods to examine the empirical relationships. The remainder of Chapter VI performs the logistic regression estimation, the Clarify predicted probabilities procedure, undertakes a predicted probabilities-oriented controlled experiment, and discusses the results.
EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

For ease of explanation, I separate the estimations into two analyses. Table 4.1 illustrates a set of preliminary estimations which examine the mass media variables in isolation from the literature variables. Model 1 and Model 2 within Table 4.1 test whether the mass media variables are significant predictors of the probability of civil conflict. After determining preliminary significance and directionality in Table 4.1, the analysis section turns to Table 4.2 which examines the mass media variables in conjunction with the literature variables. Model 3 represents the primary empirical analysis on the relationship between mass media and the likelihood of civil conflict.

Before testing an all-encompassing model, it is first necessary to determine whether the mass media variables are significant predictors of civil conflict onset, alone. In order to establish an estimation baseline, Model 1 assesses the mass media variables, *Media Freedom* and *Media Access*, without the interaction term. As theorized, *Media Freedom* and *Media Access* are each signed as theoretically expected and are significant predictors of civil conflict onset. Making sense of the *Media Freedom* result, it is important to recall Freedom House’s coding scale.

Perhaps counterintuitively, Freedom House measures a state’s level of media freedom on a 0 to 100 scale with 0 being “most free” and 100 being “least free”. The positive and significant result for *Media Freedom* indicates that as the media freedom score increases (decreases in media freedom), the likelihood a state experiences a civil conflict increases. Given the negative sign, the *Media Access* result suggests as a state’s level of media access decreases, the probability it will experience a civil conflict increases.
Model 2 introduces my theoretical addition to the literature, *Media Interaction*. While only a preliminary test, Model 2 exhibits encouraging results for the importance of including *Media Interaction* in likelihood of civil conflict examinations. However, beyond indicating *Media Interaction* has a significant influence on the probability of civil conflict onset, the dynamic nature of this relationship cannot be demonstrated by a logistic regression output. I will expand on this point when discussing the results illustrated in Table 4.2. Model 2 determines two other interesting findings. First, despite introducing *Media Interaction*, *Media Freedom* retains significance and expected sign. It appears that a state’s level of media freedom is a more
robust indicator than I anticipated. Second, *Media Access* loses significance when *Media Interaction* is included in the estimation. This result is a logical result of the interaction term’s inclusion.

Table 4.2 examines the three mass media variables in conjunction with the civil conflict literature variables. Like Model 2, Model 3 determines the same respective sign and significance for *Media Freedom* and *Media Interaction*. For the literature variables, *Population* and *Prior Conflict* are highly significant predictors of civil conflict onset probability and appropriately signed. Interestingly, while significant, *Ethnic Fractionalization* is signed opposite to Alesina et al.’s (2003) findings. Model 3 demonstrates that, as the number of ethnicities increases in a state, the more likely that state is to experience a civil conflict. Finally, two surprising non-findings are *GDP Per Capita* and *Military Personnel Per Capita*. Representing two primary explanations on the probability of civil conflict in the state capacity literature, the insignificance of *GDP Per Capita* and *Military Personnel Per Capita* is an intriguing finding.

**DISCUSSION**

From Model 2’s preliminary mass media-only estimation to Model 5’s all-inclusive estimation, *Media Interaction* consistently demonstrates a statistically significant result on the likelihood of civil conflict onset. Clearly, the significant results are an important first step in testing the three hypotheses; without significance, *Media Interaction* would be no better than zero as a civil conflict onset predictor. While a logistic regression can indicate whether *Media Interaction* has a significant effect on the probability of civil conflict, the estimation does not show the dynamic nature of this effect. Said in a different way, logistic regression estimation offers little on the inner-mechanics of the relationship beyond the probabilistic statement that the
Table 4.2 Logistic Regression Models with Multiple Imputation on the Determinants of Civil Conflict Onset

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Model 3</th>
<th>Model 4</th>
<th>Model 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Media and</td>
<td>Media and</td>
<td>Media and All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>State Capacity</td>
<td>Opportunity</td>
<td>Civil Conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>and Grievance</td>
<td>Variables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media Freedom (_a)</td>
<td>.0451 ***</td>
<td>.0320 ***</td>
<td>.0302 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.0112)</td>
<td>(.0096)</td>
<td>(.0116)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media Access (_a)</td>
<td>.0039</td>
<td>.0007</td>
<td>.0035</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.0027)</td>
<td>(.0019)</td>
<td>(.0025)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media Interaction (_a)</td>
<td>-.0001 **</td>
<td>-.0001 **</td>
<td>-.0001 **</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.0001)</td>
<td>(.0001)</td>
<td>(.0001)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military Personnel Per Capita (_ab)</td>
<td>2.7028</td>
<td>36.1038</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(21.3533)</td>
<td>(24.4552)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rough Terrain (_a)</td>
<td>.0065</td>
<td>.0062</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.00004)</td>
<td>(.0081)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP Per Capita (_ab)</td>
<td>-.0001</td>
<td>-.0001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.00005)</td>
<td>(.00004)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oil (_a) (_c)</td>
<td>1.0437 **</td>
<td>.7532</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.4779)</td>
<td>(.4923)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regime Instability (_a) (_c)</td>
<td>.0371</td>
<td>.1084</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.4405)</td>
<td>(.4022)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regime Type (_a)</td>
<td>.0671</td>
<td>.0454</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.0470)</td>
<td>(.0447)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regime Type Squared (_a)</td>
<td>-.0080</td>
<td>-.0094</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.0083)</td>
<td>(.0087)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prior Conflict (_c)</td>
<td>2.6683 ***</td>
<td>2.5003 ***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.6677)</td>
<td>(.6053)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Growth (_c)</td>
<td>-.0221</td>
<td>-.0150</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.0303)</td>
<td>(.0271)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Population (_a) (_b)</td>
<td>.6002 ***</td>
<td>.5505 ***</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.1596)</td>
<td>(.1463)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic Fractionalization (_a)</td>
<td>2.0770 ***</td>
<td>1.7339 **</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.8087)</td>
<td>(.8947)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Fractionalization (_a)</td>
<td>-1.1312 *</td>
<td>-1.7352</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.6187)</td>
<td>(.6333)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnic Dominance (_a) (_c)</td>
<td>.4098</td>
<td>.0191</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.4340)</td>
<td>(.4372)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time (_a)</td>
<td>.1161</td>
<td>.1097</td>
<td>.2390</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.7823)</td>
<td>(.7420)</td>
<td>(.8672)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time 2 (_a)</td>
<td>-.0442</td>
<td>-.0529</td>
<td>-.0603</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.1279)</td>
<td>(.1223)</td>
<td>(.1389)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time 3 (_a)</td>
<td>.0027</td>
<td>.0034</td>
<td>.0034</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.0063)</td>
<td>(.0060)</td>
<td>(.0067)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant (_a)</td>
<td>-5.9818 ***</td>
<td>-14.7888 ***</td>
<td>-14.9124 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(.5875)</td>
<td>(2.8036)</td>
<td>(2.7162)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No. of Observations: 1584
No. of Subjects: 156

Notes: Standard errors are in parentheses. Estimations performed using Stata 13. \*p < .10; \*\*p < .05; \*\*\*p < .01.

\(_a\) lagged one year
\(_b\) logged
\(_c\) demeaned
likelihood a state experiences civil conflict increases as Media Interaction decreases. That said, in order to appropriately test the three hypotheses, an additional estimation is necessary to tease out the nuances of the Media Interaction-Civil Conflict Onset relationship. I use the Clarify program to generate predicted probabilities of civil conflict onset to better understand this relationship (Tomz, Wittenberg and King 2003).

By assessing the change in probabilities of civil conflict onset for each outcome according to the varying values of Media Interaction, Clarify simulates quantities of interest from the logistic regression model by assessing the change in probabilities of civil conflict onset as each of the interacted values of Media Interaction vary. In order to test the three hypotheses, I categorize media freedom into two types: “high” and “low” media freedom media environments. I define “high” and “low” media freedom by percentiles on the Freedom House media freedom scale. The twenty-fifth percentile and seventy-fifth percentile represents “high” media freedom and “low” media freedom media environments, respectively. The twenty-fifth percentile is a 28 and the seventy-fifth percentile is a 69 on the Freedom House media freedom scale. After isolating “high” and “low” media freedom, I simulate the probability of civil conflict (y-axis) for these values of media freedom as the value of media access changes (x-axis). Figure 4.3 graphically illustrates this simulation.

In order to simulate the terminology and contentions made in Chapter III, I separate the level of media access into terciles which are “limited”, “moderate”, and “widespread”. As media access is ranked on a range from 1 (lowest) to 830 highest, I divide 830 into three equal sections of 277. Consequently, 1 to 277 is “limited”, 278 to 554 is “moderate”, and 555 to 830 is “widespread” media access. Admittedly, these media access divisions are arbitrary.
“HIGH” MEDIA FREEDOM ANALYSIS

The predicted probabilities result for “high” media freedom appears to fit Hypothesis 1’s theoretical contention. However, in order to fail to reject Hypothesis 1’s null hypothesis, “high” media freedom’s predicted probabilities must demonstrate two jointly necessary and sufficient conditions in Figure 4.3. This section assesses each condition, discusses the theoretical implications, and determines whether to reject or fail to reject Hypothesis 1’s null hypothesis.

First, Hypothesis 1 argues that the probability of civil conflict must be at its highest when the level of media access is at its lowest level. In Figure 4.3, “high” media freedom’s highest likelihood of civil conflict occurs when the level of media access is most “limited”. From a theory standpoint, this result suggests that prospective rebels are more likely to calculate to rebel
when the level of media access is “limited” than otherwise in a “high” media freedom media environment. Second, Hypothesis 1 contends that the probability of civil conflict decreases as the level of media access increases. Figure 4.3 illustrates a consistently negative slope when moving left to right on the “high” media freedom predicted probabilities line. With the lowest probability of civil conflict being the most “widespread” level of media access, Figure 4.3 lends support to Hypothesis 1’s contentions.

It is important to note the lack of substantive effects demonstrated in the “high” media freedom predicted probabilities line. Despite the fact that “high” media freedom technically fits with the Hypothesis 1’s conditions, the substantive effects are clearly absent. So, while the highest probability of civil conflict is in the most “limited” level of media freedom, the predicted probability is roughly only 2%. Furthermore, while “high” media freedom media environments experience a decrease in the likelihood of civil conflict as the level of media access increases, the substantive change is slightly greater than a 1% probability decrease. Overall, it appears that the likelihood of civil conflict is simply low when media freedom is “high” regardless of the level of media access.

Non-Elite prospective rebels may not always have accurate regime capabilities information when media freedom is “high”. My theoretical expectation was that, due limited information, Non-Elite prospective rebels likely crystallize regime capabilities misperceptions and subsequently miscalculate when to rebel. However, regardless of the level of media access, the likelihood of civil conflict ranges between 2% to 1% for the “high” media freedom media environment. Making sense of this finding, I propose that media freedom is probably nested with other freedoms. A high correlation between the level of media freedom and regime types exists. Running an alpha test on Media Freedom and Regime Type, the correlation is .79. The
fact that *Media Freedom* in Model 1 and *Media Interaction* in the subsequent models are statistically significant in the logistic regression estimations is a testament to the civil conflict predictive robustness of these variables.

So, when media freedom is “high”, prospective rebels do not rebel because they have an altered rebellion calculus regardless of the level of media access. Prospective rebels choose to rebel in order to change the status quo to greater maximize their welfare and when the regime is perceived to be weak. Rebellion, in this scenario, is a low cost mechanism to maximize a prospective rebel’s welfare. But, if a prospective rebel is afforded an inclusive political system, a lower cost method exists for him or her to change the political environment and maximize welfare. Here, remaining a noncombatant and acting intra-institutionally would be the preferred rebellion decision strategy. Consequently, as long as the prospective rebel feels he or she can efficiently and effectively maximize welfare by acting within the existing political institution, the likelihood of civil conflict will be low. In short, when media freedom is “high”, both Elite and Non-Elite prospective rebels likely prefer to remain noncombatants regardless of the level of media access.

In conclusion, the “high” media freedom results in Figure 4.3 do not contradict the two jointly sufficient and necessary conditions to fail to reject Hypothesis 1. However, the predicted probabilities result for “high” media freedom does not demonstrate a substantive change in the likelihood of civil conflict as the level of media access varies. As such, I reject the null hypothesis for Hypothesis 1 but with reservations on the substantive importance of this finding.
“LOW” MEDIA FREEDOM ANALYSIS

The predicted probabilities result for “low” media freedom predicted probabilities result in Figure 4.3 appears to match the theoretical arguments in Hypothesis 2. Like Hypothesis 1, “low” media freedom must graphically demonstrate two jointly necessary and sufficient conditions in order to fail to reject Hypothesis 2’s null hypothesis. This section assesses each condition in turn, discusses the theoretical implications, and determines whether to reject or fail to reject Hypothesis 2’s null hypothesis.

Hypothesis 2 contends that the highest likelihood of civil conflict occurs when the level of media access is most “limited” and Figure 4.3 offers graphical support for this condition. Here, the highest likelihood of civil conflict is (9%) when the level of media access is zero. In short, Figure 4.3 graphically demonstrates support for the first condition of Hypothesis 2.

Hypothesis 2 contends that the probability of civil conflict decreases as the level of media access increases and Figure 4.1 demonstrates this condition as well. Here, the “low” media freedom predicted probabilities shows a curvilinear and negative sloped result with the lowest likelihood of civil conflict (sub-1%) occurring at 830, the highest level of media access. This graphical result supports the second of two conditions in Hypothesis 2.

Several implications for Hypothesis 2’s theoretical explanations can be drawn from the “low” media freedom predicted probabilities graph. First, as theorized, the likelihood of civil conflict is at its highest when the level of media access is most “limited”. This result supports the contention that the more prospective rebels rely on the non-mass media sources of information for regime capabilities information, the more likely they will crystallize misperceptions and consequently miscalculate their rebellion decision calculi. Ultimately, the predicted probabilities result lends support to my contention that civil conflict is most likely
when prospective rebels must significantly rely on limited information sources for regime capabilities information.

Second, Figure 4.3 determines the likelihood of civil conflict is near-zero when the level of media access is at its most “widespread” level and is a similar result to the theoretical illustration in Figure 3.8. The near-zero predicted probability when media access is “widespread” in Figure 4.3 lends support to the theoretical explanation that the likelihood of civil conflict should be low when a large sector of the population can receive pro-regime-oriented mass media messages. Given its aggregate purview, both Elite and Non-Elite prospective rebels are likely to utilize mass media to gather regime capabilities information when it is widely available. However, the controlled nature of the media environment makes it likely that the prospective rebels receive pro-regime messages on the regime’s capacity to combat a rebellion. I theorized that the regime is able to manufacture the perception of strong capabilities in the minds of the prospective rebels by controlling the definition newsworthiness and the content of the messages. For my mass media pacification contention to be determined, the lowest likelihood of civil conflict must occur at the highest level of media access in Figure 4.3. The consistent negative slope and the lowest likelihood of civil conflict manifesting in highest level of media access lends further support to my theoretical explanation widespread access to pro-regime messages creates a pacifying effect on rebellion decision calculus.

Overall, the change in the predicted probabilities of civil conflict as the level of media access varies in a “low” media freedom media environment fit the theoretical expectations in Hypothesis 2. Figure 4.3 shows that the highest likelihood of civil conflict occurs when the level of media access is at its most “limited” level. Also, Figure 4.3 demonstrates that the probability of civil conflict decreases as the level of media access increases. This results supports the
contention that the greater the level of media access, the greater the level of prospective rebel pacification in a state. Considering these findings in tandem, I am able to reject the null hypothesis for Hypothesis 2.

COMPARING “HIGH” AND “LOW” MEDIA FREEDOM MEDIA ENVIRONMENTS

Hypothesis 3 considers the probability of civil conflict between the two media freedom types. It contends that the “high” media freedom type is comparatively more likely to experience civil conflict that the “low” media freedom type. Figure 4.3 shows mixed support for Hypothesis 3. When media access is “limited”, Figure 4.3 illustrates that the “low” media freedom media environment is demonstratively more likely to experience a civil conflict than the “high” media freedom media environment. As discussed in the Hypothesis 1 analysis, likely due to nested political freedoms and the effect on the rebellion decision calculus the risk of civil conflict is low for the “high” media freedom media environment when media access is “limited”. Here, the highest likelihood of civil conflict in a “high” media freedom type is roughly 2%.

Non-Elite prospective rebels in the “low” media freedom media environments are unlikely to face this nested freedom dynamic. Rather, Figure 4.3 suggests that a “limited” media access level likely affects a Non-Elite prospective rebel’s regime capabilities perceptions and the subsequent rebellion decision calculus. For Non-Elite prospective rebels, due to their likely significant reliance on limited information sources for regime capabilities Non-Elite prospective rebels are likely to crystallize regime capabilities misperceptions which rebel elevates the overall probability to civil conflict. Comparing the 2% probability of civil conflict in a “high” media freedom and “limited” media access media system type, the likelihood of civil conflict is much higher, 9%, in the “low” media freedom and “limited” media access media system type. In sum,
Figure 4.3 demonstrates a media freedom type outcome opposite to Hypothesis 3’s contention when the level of media access is “limited”.

When media access is “widespread”, the difference in predicted probabilities of civil conflict between “high” and “low” media freedom media environments is slight. While negligible, the “low” media freedom type does demonstrate a slightly lower likelihood of civil conflict than the “high” media freedom media environment. Using the highest level of media access to compare the media types, the difference between “high” and “low” media freedom types is less than 1%. True, the “high” media freedom media type demonstrates a greater likelihood of civil conflict when media access is 830, this is not a substantively distinct difference. This is an intriguing result which, I find, underscores the impact that “widespread” pro-regime messages likely have on the regime capabilities perceptions that crystallize for both Elite and Non-Elite prospective rebels. The implication of this result that a state which is able to heavily control the definition of newsworthiness and the content of news media can likely influence the regime capabilities perceptions of a population with significant access to mass media. By manufacturing “strong” regime capabilities perceptions in a population, a state can pacify prospective rebels by increasing the cost to rebel factor in the rebellion decision calculus. In short, interestingly, a propaganda-type media produces a lower predicted probability of civil conflict than a watchdog free media when media access is “widespread”.

Moreover, the predicted probabilities of civil conflict for “high” and “low” media freedom media environments do not support the contentions and supporting theoretical expectations in Hypothesis 3. While Figure 4.3 shows that the “high” media freedom has slightly higher probability of civil conflict than the “low” type, the opposite occurs when media
access is “limited” which contradicts Hypothesis 3’s contention. Considering this finding, I am able to confidently reject the null hypothesis for Hypothesis 3.

In sum, the predicted probabilities estimation graphically sheds light on the nuanced effect that Media Interaction has upon the likelihood of civil conflict onset. By separating the data into “high” and “low” media freedom media environments, Figure 4.3 illustrates the differences in the likelihood of civil conflict between the categories as the level of media access changes. Using these graphical results, I was able to reject the null hypothesis for Hypotheses 1 and 2; however, I failed to reject the null hypothesis for Hypothesis 3. On Hypothesis 1, although the “high” media freedom type fits Hypothesis 1’s contentions, the lack of a substantive effect diminishes the importance of this finding. On Hypothesis 2, the significant and substantive change in the likelihood of civil conflict for “low” media freedom as media access varies is the novel finding in the predicted probabilities estimation. Here, I show support for the contentions that, when considered in tandem, media freedom and media access effect rebellion behavior but only when media freedom is “low”.

“MOST SIMILAR” CONTROLLED EXPERIMENT: GUINEA AND TAJIKISTAN

The predicted probabilities estimation in Figure 4.3 nicely illustrates support for Hypothesis 2 where the likelihood of civil conflict decreases as media access increases in a “low” media freedom media environment. However, this conclusion remains removed from the real world; a tangible, real world element is missing from the findings. I contend that a “most similar” controlled experiment can bridge the predicted probabilities results and Media Interaction’s hypothesized effect on the likelihood of civil conflict. By comparing two “low” media freedom states with similarly “weak” state capacity levels, I can control the objective
indicators of state strength and, at the same time, vary my media effect indicator, the level of media access. If the countries demonstrate a difference in the predicted probability of civil conflict, the controlled experiment would suggest that a subjective, perceptual element of state capacity strength influences the likelihood of civil conflict.

The controlled experiment set up is a straightforward four-step process. First, I begin by selecting two countries, Country A and Country B. As I am analyzing Media Interaction’s predictive capacity in “low” media freedom media environment, both states must have similar Freedom House “low” press freedom scores. Second, in order to control for the state capacity literature’s proposed effects, Country A and Country B need to possess similarly weak levels of state capacity. While acknowledging that no two states are exactly alike, I choose the states with similarly low per capita revenues, small militaries, and anocratic political institutions. Third, just as Figure 4.3 suggests that the likelihood of civil conflict decreases as the level of media access increases in a “limited” media freedom media environment, the controlled experiment hinges on Country A and Country B possessing very different levels of media access. In order to match the Hypothesis 2’s civil conflict likelihood directionality, Country A will have a “limited” level of media access and Country B will possess at least a “moderate” level of media access. Finally, fourth, I generate a predicted probability of civil conflict for each country year observation in the dataset, using the Clarify program.

The two countries I choose from the dataset for the controlled experiment are Guinea (1999) and Tajikistan (2002). The matching process was constrained by the fact that matching states on multiple dimensions is inherently difficult to accomplish and the timeframe of analysis is only twelve years. That said, these two states are fairly similar and both demonstrate weak state capacities across several of the state capacity indicators. Table 4.4 illustrates these
similarities. Guinea and Tajikistan both possess “low” levels of media freedom (Freedom House scores of 71 and 76, respectively), similarly small militaries (20th percentile and 10th percentile in the entire dataset, respectively), low per capita revenues (15th percentile and 21st percentile respectively), and are anocratic political institutions (each are coded as a nine on the one to twenty Polity2 scale). Additionally, Guinea and Tajikistan have similar population sizes, neither has experienced a prior conflict, and neither possesses significant oil reserves. While Guinea and Tajikistan are highly similar on media freedom, state capacity, and other factors, the two states differ significantly on two dimensions: the level of media access and the predicted probability of civil conflict.

Guinea (1999) has only 16 televisions per 1,000 people. By comparison, Tajikistan (2002) has 287 televisions per 1,000 people. The astute reader will note that 287 is a “moderate” not a “widespread” level of media access. I had to sacrifice some level of media access to maximize the weak state capacity similarities between the two countries. This is not necessarily a problem as the 287 level of media access is largely right of the “low” media freedom’s near-exponential decrease in Figure 4.3. While not quite “widespread”, Tajikistan possesses a level of media access almost 18 times greater than Guinea.

Comparing the predicted probabilities of civil conflict, Tajikistan is estimated at a 2.44% and Guinea at 9.07%. If the state capacity literature’s objective contentions are correct, no meaningful difference in the predicted probabilities of civil conflict should be estimated between Tajikistan and Guinea. Rather, if a state is weak on all three dimensions of state capacity, the predicted probability of civil conflict should be high in both Tajikistan and Guinea. On the contrary, these results support my subjective, perceptual explanation that state capacity is not
directly observable through the objective state capacity indicators. Despite the same level of state strength in Tajikistan and Guinea, *Media Interaction* acts as an indirect indicator of state capacity in “low” media freedom media environments.

Overall, the low predicted probability of civil conflict in Tajikistan suggests that the state capacity indicators alone are not enough to determine the likelihood of civil conflict. By constraining the level of media freedom and providing at least a “moderate” level of media access to its populace, these results strongly suggest that regimes, even when weak, can reduce the likelihood of civil conflict by manufacturing strength in prospective rebels’ regime capabilities perceptions. In short, regimes are only weak if they are perceived to be weak by the prospective rebels, and, only through the *Media Interaction* subjective indicator, can this divergence in the predicted probability of civil conflict be determined.
CONCLUSION

Chapter IV offered an empirical examination of the theoretical explanations hypothesized in Chapter III. Using a series of logistic regression estimations, I demonstrated that media freedom and media access, together, is a significant predictor of the likelihood of civil conflict onset. I calculate the predicted probabilities in “high” and “low” media freedom media environments as the level of media access changes. The graphical findings demonstrate mixed results for my three hypotheses. When media freedom is “high” regardless of the level of media access, the likelihood of civil conflict is low. Conversely, when media freedom is “low”, Figure 4.3 shows that the likelihood of civil conflict changes significantly as the level of media access varies. Here, as theorized in Chapter III, the likelihood of civil conflict is low when the level of media access is “widespread”. I argue that, because the pro-regime message is likely both asymmetrically loud and widely available for reception in this media system type, both Elite and Non-Elite prospective rebels are likely to accept these messages as their regime capabilities perceptions. Given that that likely message content espouses regime capabilities “strength”, prospective rebels like accept these cues as their regime capabilities perceptions. Using these perceptions to calculate their rebellion decision calculi, the Elite and Non-Elite prospective rebels are likely to calculate that the regime is difficult to defeat and thereby remain noncombatants. In the controlled experiment, the low predicted probability of civil conflict in Tajikistan (2002) appears to demonstrate that, through a controlled mass media and at least a “moderate” level of media access, a regime can manufacture strength and pacify prospective rebels.

As the availability of mass media decreases, Non-Elite prospective rebels likely receive less pro-regime media messages. In the place of pro-regime media messages, Non-Elite
prospective rebels gather information from other, limited information sources to form perceptions on the regime’s capabilities. Here, Non-Elite prospective rebels likely replace misinformation for limited information which influences their regime capabilities perceptions. While “limited” media access likely insulates Non-Elite prospective rebels from pro-regime biased media messages, their increased reliance on limited information sources heightens the odds of crystallizing regime capabilities misperceptions. The probability of civil conflict is shown to increase as the level of media access decreases in a state in Figure 4.3. This result is mirrored in the controlled experiment as well; whereas Guinea is unable to effectively use controlled mass media influence prospective rebel regime capabilities perceptions due to “limited” media access. Ultimately, when considering the empirical results from Tables 4.1 and 4.2 along with Figure 4.3’s predicted probabilities and the controlled experiment, I conclude that Media Interaction can influence the likelihood of civil conflict but only when media freedom is “low”.

In the next chapter, I first consider how my dissertation fits in and affects the civil conflict literature. Next, I discuss a few of the obvious challenges my study was required to work around. Finally, I propose two particular directions of future research given the challenges and data limitations.
CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION

Chapter V concludes the dissertation by discussing three topics. First, I review my theoretical contentions, the empirical findings, and the conclusions drawn in the prior four chapters. Next, I consider how a prospective rebel’s perception of regime capabilities and *Media Interaction* should be incorporated into the existing literature. I offer both general and specific places for this relationship’s inclusion into the literature. I close the chapter by discussing some of the data limitations and theoretical challenges in the dissertation. As a result, I propose areas of future research that can buttress and expand my study.

REVIEW

My dissertation began with the question, “why do prospective rebels choose to rebel”? Of course, nearly infinite reasons exist why an individual prospective rebel takes up arms against his or her incumbent regime. One particular explanation of civil conflict onset is an analysis of a state’s capacity. Using factors like military strength and bureaucratic capacity, state capacity research determines that the likelihood of civil conflict increases as the incumbent regime’s capacity to combat a rebellion weakens. My dissertation begins by identifying a fundamental gap in the state capacity literature’s theoretical causal chain: the informational assumption. Here, the state capacity literature assumes, albeit implicitly, a prospective rebel
knows a regime’s strength and thereby when to rebel based on these capabilities factors. In short, prospective rebels are assumed to have complete information.

I argue complete information is an unrealistic assumption and that prospective rebels probably possess incomplete information. However, with this new assumption comes equally new questions: where does a prospective rebel likely get regime capabilities information from, do these sources likely influence a prospective rebel’s perception differently, do all prospective rebels possess the same informational access, and how do these regime capabilities perceptions affect a prospective rebel’s rebellion decision calculus? First, by assuming that prospective rebels likely have only incomplete information, I fundamentally reconsider how prospective rebels calculate their rebellion decision. Here, a prospective rebel’s rebellion calculus is not derived from the regime’s actual capabilities, rather, their perception of it. As such, I argue that the level and type of regime capabilities information that a prospective rebel possesses likely has some effect on the rebellion calculus.

When considering the sources of information that are likely available for prospective rebels to gather regime capabilities information from, I argue that mass media is potentially the most informative as it can provide regime capabilities information at the national level. However, mass media can be manipulated by regimes and is not necessarily equally accessible to all prospective rebels. These structural effects present an informational variance not only between countries but also within domestic populations. Moreover, I contend it is the combination of these mass media factors that shape a prospective rebel’s regime capabilities perception.

Employing a variant of Zaller’s RAS model, the crossover effect model, I assert that a prospective rebel’s regime capabilities perceptions are likely influenced as these two structural
factors covary in scope. Separating states into “high” and “low” media freedom media environments, I assess the probability that a state experiences civil conflict as the level of media access varies. I propose that the likelihood of civil conflict increases, regardless of the media freedom level, as the level of media access decreases. Furthermore, I also hypothesize that “high” media freedom media environments are comparatively more likely to experience civil conflict than “low” media freedom ones. I test these hypotheses using a logistic regression to estimate the significance of the mass media interaction term. I determine that Media Interaction significantly predicts the likelihood of civil conflict and is signed appropriately per my theoretical expectations. However, the logistic regression results represent only the first statistical hurdle; it does not offer a dynamic description of the relationship between civil conflict onset and the interaction term. In order to accomplish this, I employ the Clarify program to produce predicted probabilities of the likelihood of civil conflict as the level of media access varies. As my predictor variable is an interaction term, I isolate the level of media freedom as my constant term. But, as I expect a difference in the likelihood of civil conflict exists in the level of media freedom, I separate media freedom into two media environment categories, “high” and “low”, estimate the predicted probabilities for each, and compare the two results.

Graphing the predicted probabilities, I determine mixed results for my three hypotheses. As I hypothesize, the probability of civil conflict increases as the level of media access decreases in both media freedom media environments. However, a substantive change in the probability of civil conflict is only demonstrated in the “low” media freedom media environment. Making sense of these results, I conclude that, while the likelihood of civil conflict increases as the level of media access decreases, the substantive effect only occurs when the level of media freedom is “low”. I argue that the probability of civil conflict is low due to the nested political freedoms
that likely come with “high” media freedom environments. Here, the regime may be weak and prospective rebels should choose to rebel, but the other political freedoms offered make rebellion more costly than intra-institutional political action which alters the rebellion decision calculus. In short, political freedoms like a transparent, inclusive political system likely spillover which reduces the probability of civil conflict, regardless of the level of media access.

When the level of media freedom is “low”, a prospective rebel is not faced with the same political freedom spillover. Rather, a prospective rebel likely contends with a different informational dilemma: misinformation. While I cannot know exactly what content and cues are included in every mass media message in every country with a “low” media freedom level, it is not egregious to assume that content is pro-regime biased when a regime has significant control over the mass media institution. Therefore, when media access is “widespread”, all prospective rebels are likely to use and receive pro-regime messages on the level of regime capabilities. Because of the controlled content environment, these pro-regime messages are likely asymmetrically loud. Combining these two factors, I hypothesize that all prospective rebels are likely to form regime capabilities perceptions similar to pro-regime cues in the media messages. Using these perceptions as part of their rebellion decision calculus, I hypothesize that the “low” media freedom media environment should demonstrate a low likelihood of civil conflict when media access is “widespread”. The predicted probabilities estimation lends support to this contention in that the likelihood of civil conflict is sub-1% in the “low” media freedom and “widespread” media access media system type. I conclude this result directly stems from prospective rebels having significant access to pro-regime biased mass media.

As the level of media access decreases, the less likely pro-regime media messages will influence the perception of the regime’s capabilities. Consequently, prospective rebels likely
increasingly rely on the limited information sources for regime capabilities information. Here, I hypothesize that Non-Elite prospective rebels are more likely to formulate misperceptions of the regime’s capabilities and chose to rebel due to the reliance on limited information. In short, the switch from misinformation to limited information likely increases the likelihood of civil conflict. The predicted probabilities estimation supports this theoretical contention; the likelihood of civil conflict increases dramatically as the level of media access decreases.

EXPANDED HORIZONS: MASS MEDIA AND PROSPECTIVE REBEL PERCEPTION IN THE CIVIL CONFLICT ONSET LITERATURE

Stepping back from the detail of the dissertation, it is important to consider the general impact my results have on the broader civil conflict onset literature. My mass media-civil conflict conclusions challenge the state capacity scholars to look beyond the standard military size, revenue level, and political institution objective indicators and to consider the predictive power that subjective influences on prospective rebels have on the likelihood of civil conflict. I show that even regimes with weak capabilities can demonstrate a low likelihood of civil conflict which is counter to the state capacity’s fundamental thesis. The Tajikistan-Guinea controlled experiment highlights how the rebellion decision calculus is a subjective process for the prospective rebel, particularly in a “low” media freedom media environment. By broadcasting controlled mass media messages to a public with even “moderate” media access, regimes can manufacture a regime capabilities perception of state strength in the minds of prospective rebels which pacifies their rebellion decision calculus and lowers the likelihood of civil conflict. Moreover, I conclude that a prospective rebel’s regime capabilities perception, not the actual strength, is the indicator for the likelihood of civil conflict, particularly in “low” media freedom media environments.
My findings suggest that the next wave of civil conflict onset research should continue to examine the factors that influence a prospective rebel’s regime capabilities perception of regime strength. This dissertation focuses on the influential role mass media has on a prospective rebel’s regime capabilities perception and the rebellion decision calculus. Given the newness of this research direction, countless areas of future research exist. I propose a few ripe research ideas for the eager civil conflict scholar, a few of which particular address some of the challenges and assumptions particular to my dissertation.

LIMITED INFORMATION SOURCES

In my dissertation, I operate under the assumption that information from non-mass media sources is limited and thereby less informative for a prospective rebel. As such, personal experience does not offer a holistic picture of the regime’s actual aggregate capabilities due to the fact that prospective rebels likely only observe phenomenon near their residences. While not an egregious assumption, research opportunities often arise from assumptions.

It is important to continue to refine what prospective rebels likely experience as I theorize it can influence their regime capabilities perceptions. Here, I propose two ways to accomplish this objective. First, a simple proxy for personal experience with regime capabilities would be distance from the capital. In a sense, this proxy would replace one assumption with a more theoretically-derived one where a prospective rebel’s personal experience is more likely provide accurate information on the regime’s capabilities the closer he or she is to the epicenter of the regime’s power.

Second, given the technological advancements in geographic information systems (GIS) data, political science, and even more specifically civil conflict, scholars have begun to utilize it to test hypotheses with spatial elements. A more advanced personal experience proxy could
include GIS data and a coding initiative. Using geographic mapping and military research by country, a civil conflict research could replace “the capital” in the simple proxy with military bases. While the capital likely has a significant military presence, other military installations outside of the capital can shape a prospective rebel’s regime capabilities perception just as well. For example, while the residents of South Hill, Virginia are closer to Washington DC than those of Fayetteville, North Carolina, the Fayetteville residents live less than 10 miles for Fort Bragg. I would expect the Fayetteville residents, by virtue of their proximity to one of the largest US military bases, possess a more accurate perception of the US’s military capabilities than the resident of South Hill despite being farther from Washington DC. To be certain, a cross-national military base GIS coding would be a very rewarding project that could yield a better understanding of personal experience’s varying influence on a prospective rebel’s regime capabilities perception.

MESSAGE MEDIUM AND MESSAGE CONTENT

In the dissertation, I argue that the level of media freedom and the level of media access structural effect the information prospective rebels likely receive. However, I make at least two mass media assumptions which offer springboards for future research. These assumptions are the mass media medium chosen and the relationship between media content and behavior. First, the mass media medium I use to represent media access is television which is chosen because it avoids the theoretical problems of newspaper and internet. However, another mass media medium avoids these problems as well, radio.

When choosing the mass media medium to proxy media access, radio, not television was my first preference. As noted above, radio avoids the theoretical problems presented in newspaper and internet and it provides a tougher test; whereas radio has a lower purchase price
which closes the informational gap between Non-Elite and Elite prospective rebels, AM and shortwave radio greater distances in receptivity than antenna television which would provide prospective rebels in even larger area countries with aggregate, national information, and some African countries are shown to have gone from radio to internet skipping television as an important media information source. So, why not radio in this study? In 1995, the World Bank’s World Development Index stopped actively collecting Radios per 1,000 people data, and by 1997, this radio data was removed from the data set altogether. Unlike radio, Televisions per 1,000 people data was available for the entire 1993 to 2004 timeframe. Television, while not the most preferred mass media medium, remains theoretically more viable than newspapers and internet.

In order to include radio as the mass media medium to proxy media access and confirm or reject the television results, a researcher would need to search for individual country Radios per 1,000 people data by country from 1995 to 2004. I have undertaken a cursory search for this data and it is haphazardly available. Having said that, testing radio data would provide a crucial robustness check to my television conclusions; are these results bound strictly to television or are they representative of media effect across mass media mediums. I cannot stress the importance of this proposed research project enough.

Second, I assume that prospective rebels will consume mass media messages when available to them. On the surface, this assumption seems logical; a prospective rebel is likely motivated to learn as much as possible about his or her potential opponent and so assuming high cognitive engagement on this issue is not unreasonable. However, outside of this cognitive engagement assumption, I cannot confirm individual prospective rebels actually receive mass media and crystallize a regime capabilities perception that includes this information. In short, it
is crucial to make the individual media message reception and individual behavior link in order to demonstrate media cue causality.

Of course, survey data with specific mass media usage questions are rare but available. The real hurdle is finding a survey with both specific media usage and rebellion/protest questions that was conducted during the cusp of a civil conflict. Intriguingly, Afrobarometer released a survey in late 2013 on social media usage and rebellion/protest participation during the Arab Spring. Having reviewed the survey questions, researchers should be able to gauge whether or not a person had access to social media messages, consumed them, and participated in (which/how many) protests. An individual level of analysis study such as this would determine the viability of the media access-media reception as well as media effect-rebellion/protest behavior assumptions made in my dissertation. Additionally, it would provide an opportunity to theorize about internet’s effect on an individual’s perception and behavior which has become an en vogue topic in the political communication sub-field.

Moreover, I propose that mass media is an important factor when considering the likelihood of civil conflict onset. I offer a multi-faceted theoretical explanation that draws from several different civil conflict literatures, political science sub-fields, and social science fields. Empirically testing this contention, I determine that mass media is a significant predictor of civil conflict onset under certain conditions. Overall, I present a new method to consider civil conflict onset and with it a new research agenda on incomplete information, the prospective rebel, and perception.


De Tocqueville, Alexis. (1835). *Democracy in America*


Gerrard, A. James. (2000). “What is a Mountain?” *The University of Chicago mimeo*


Calculus of Fear: Revolution, Repression, and the Rational Peasant.” *Social Science Quarterly* 81(2): 622-633


Skocpol, Theda. (1979). States and Social Revolutions: A Comparative Analysis of France, Russia and China Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press


VITA

JACOB WALTER DRYDEN

Department of Political Science
329 Deupree Hall
University of Mississippi
(901) 232-7042
jwdryden@olemiss.edu

EDUCATION

University of Mississippi, Oxford, Mississippi
Ph.D., Political Science, 2014
Fields: International Relations, Comparative Politics


Fields: International Relations, Comparative Politics

Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research, University of Michigan
Program Scholar, Summer 2011

Seton Hall University, South Orange, New Jersey
John C. Whitehead School of Diplomacy and International Relations
Fields: International Political Economy, Middle Eastern Politics

Hanover College, Hanover, Indiana

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

Instructor of Record, University of Mississippi
POL 251: Introduction to Political Science Methods
POL 103: Introduction to International Relations

Teaching Assistant, University of Mississippi
POL 101: Introduction to International Relations
CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS


GRANTS AND AWARDS
Summer Research Assistant Fellowship Award, University of Mississippi, Summer 2011

Political Science Departmental Travel Grant, University of Mississippi, January 2012, March 2012, January 2013

Graduate School Travel Grant, Graduate School, University of Mississippi, January 2012, March 2012, January 2013

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES AND AFFILIATIONS


Member, Southern Political Science Association

Member, Midwest Political Science Association